

**DEMOCRATIC DISAFFECTION: ON THE PATHOLOGIES OF  
POSTWAR DEMOCRACY**

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# DEMOCRATIC DISAFFECTION: ON THE PATHOLOGIES OF POSTWAR DEMOCRACY

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This dissertation interrogates the phenomenon of disaffection in post-World War II democracies and, in doing so, offers a theory of the affective dimension of democratic politics. Although many countries have formally democratized after World War II, they suffer from political apathy, withdrawal, and disillusionment—in short, disaffection. Why have democratic institutions failed to inspire popular support necessary to sustain democratic forms of life? A dominant strand of democratic theory represented by Rawls and Habermas is not well-equipped to address this vital question, insofar as it fails to consider how affect works with reason, not as a subsidiary but an equally constitutive force, in establishing and realizing norms of democratic politics. This is theoretically blinding since a unique frame of democracy that became dominant in the postwar era (which I call “instrumental democracy”) has systemic tendencies to produce democratic disaffection. Instrumental democracy reduces democracy to an instrument that merely legitimizes, rather than contests or renegotiates, political goals predetermined by elites and technocrats. I trace the origins of instrumental democracy to the Cold War when anti-totalitarianism, market capitalism, and a highly insulted technocracy concomitantly emerged to the effect of dissolving the collective, public dimension of democracy. I scrutinize the logics of instrumental democracy by analyzing behavioralism and rational choice theory as symptomatic articulations of Cold War imperatives, and investigate its evolution in the

late twentieth century by examining democratization in Chile and South Korea. Bringing my empirical analysis into theoretical focus, I reinterpret Hannah Arendt's political theory through the prism of her creative, if underdeveloped, appropriation of two supposedly incompatible themes: Heidegger's concern with affect and Marx's critique of alienation. Thus interpreted, Arendt's theory helps us recognize that people's affective disposition toward democracy is closely connected to the structure and distribution of power. By engaging in a mutually constitutive dialogue between theory and history, I aim to identify and challenge one of the most formidable yet underappreciated trends of our time that threatens to impoverish our understanding and practice of democracy.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

A native of Seoul, South Korea, Kyong Min Son holds a Ph.D. in Government from Cornell University. Kyong Min graduated *summa cum laude* from Seoul National University in 2002 with a bachelor's degree in political science. He also earned a master's degree in political science from Seoul National University in 2005 with a thesis on deliberative democracy. In 2010, he received a master's degree in Government from Cornell University. In the fall of 2012, Kyong Min will join the Department of Political Science and International Relations at the University of Delaware as an Assistant Professor.

To Namkyeong

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## INTRODUCTION

### **The Challenge of Democratic Disaffection**

“The food of feeling is action ... Let a person have nothing to do for his country, and he will not care for it. ... Leaving things to the Government, like leaving them to Providence, is synonymous with caring nothing about them, and accepting their results, when disagreeable, as visitations of Nature. ... [T]he intelligence and sentiments of the whole people are given up to the material interests, and when these are provided for, to the amusement and ornamentation, of private life.”

--John Stuart Mill (1861)<sup>1</sup>

One of the most remarkable changes in the postwar era is the global spread of democracy. In 1941, there were only eleven democracies in the entire world. By the end of the twentieth century, however, 119 out of 192 countries could be described as electoral democracies. The worldwide trend in favor of democracy has been so striking that a recent Freedom House report declared the twentieth-century as “democracy’s century.”<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the appeal of democracy now seems virtually irresistible: all countries in the world claim to be democracies with the exception of only four countries: Brunei, Burma, Saudi Arabia, and Vatican City.<sup>3</sup> Not surprisingly, this remarkable change invited a number of celebratory accounts. Perhaps most famously, Francis Fukuyama declared as early as in 1989 that Western liberal

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<sup>1</sup> John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty and Other Essays*, ed. John Gray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 240-241.

<sup>2</sup> Freedom House, *Democracy’s Century: A Survey of the Global Political Change in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (New York: Freedom House, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.nobelprize.org/educational/peace/democracy\\_map/production/index.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/educational/peace/democracy_map/production/index.html).

democracy was “the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution” and “the final form of human government.”<sup>4</sup>

This triumphant narrative, however, has been seriously challenged by the subsequent course of history. People in many newly democratized countries show signs of political apathy, withdrawal, and disillusionment—in short, disaffection.<sup>5</sup> Voting rates are declining. People hold a dim view of political parties, do not trust major political institutions such as Congress, and support anti-establishment figures for public office. Interestingly enough, old democracies, too, are plagued by similar signs in the same period.<sup>6</sup> The trend of growing disaffection is particularly conspicuous in the United States, where both turnout and people’s confidence in the government have gradually and remarkably fallen since the 1960s.<sup>7</sup> Alarmed by this troubling phenomenon, a number of prominent scholars began to identify it as the major source of a crisis of democracy.<sup>8</sup>

To be sure, these signs are not entirely self-evident or coherent. But they are pervasive enough to raise concerns as to whether democratic disaffection—people’s affective detachment from democratic institutions and, more generally, democratic

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<sup>4</sup> Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History?” *The National Interest* 16 (Summer 1989), 4.

<sup>5</sup> On Latin America, see Marta Lagos, “How People View Democracy: Between Stability and Crisis in Latin America,” *Journal of Democracy* 12(1) (2001): 137-145. On East Asia, see Yun-han Chu, Larry Diamond, and Doh Chull Shin, “Halting Progress in Korea and Taiwan,” *Journal of Democracy* 12(1) (2001): 122-136. On Eastern Europe, see William Mischler and Richard Rose, “Trust, Distrust, and Skepticism: Popular Evaluations of Civil and Political Institutions in Post-Communist Societies,” *Journal of Politics* 59(2) (1997): 418-451.

<sup>6</sup> Russell J. Dalton, “Political Support in Advanced Industrial Countries,” in *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Governance*, ed. Pippa Norris (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 57-77; Ola Listhaug and Matti Wiberg, “Confidence in Political and Private Institutions,” in *Citizens and the State*, eds. Hans-Dieter Klingemann and Dieter Fuchs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 304-305.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas E. Patterson, *The Vanishing Voter: Public Involvement in an Age of Uncertainty* (New York: Knopf, 2002); Joseph S. Nye, Philip D. Zelikow, and David C. King, eds., *Why People Don’t Trust Government* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Everett C. Ladd and Karlyn H. Bowman, *What’s Wrong: A Survey of American Satisfaction and Complaint* (Washington, D.C.: AEI Press, 1998).

<sup>8</sup> Susan J. Pharr and Robert D. Putnam, eds., *Disaffected Democracies: What’s Troubling the Trilateral Countries?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

ways of life—is coming into being. If fully realized, democratic disaffection constitutes a fundamental threat to democracy. Democracy can exist only as a permanent reform project because, if nothing else, its ultimate foundation—“the people”—is a constantly changing entity. For that reason, democracy, more than any other form of political life, relies on the concern and the thoughtful participation of its members. For people to care about and participate in this project, however, they must have a level of confidence that their demands will be heard and realized through democratic institutions and practices. If people feel that democratic institutions are too flawed to respond to their concerns and social structures impervious to their demands, they will, in the long run, cease to make efforts to preserve and improve those institutions and, worse, begin to lose their faith in the normative validity and the practical efficacy of democratic claims-making itself. When, as in John Stuart Mill’s disturbing description in the epigraph of this Introduction, people are inclined to accept whatever result produced, without their input, by elites as “visitations of Nature” and are completely immersed in the “amusement and ornamentation of private life,” democracy is dying a slow death. Affection is what makes us vigilant and, without that vigilance, democracy is always vulnerable to becoming an empty name and turning into its ultimate nightmare—despotism.

I am not claiming that some of the empirical indicators of disaffection noted above (declining voting rates or falling trust in democratic institutions) verify that we are *in* this dismal state. Rather, my suggestion is that those indicators provoke us to reflect on the possibility that we might be moving *toward* the direction of democratic disaffection. (This is the kind of possibility, I also want to suggest, that threatens to be ignored if we insist, as some social scientists do, on studying empirical reality only when it can be verified and made operationalizable by allegedly scientific measures.) In other words, I approach democratic disaffection as an *emergent phenomenon*. By

emphasizing its emergent nature, I intend to distinguish democratic disaffection from such similar terms as “democratic disillusionment” or “democratic disappointment,” which are often invoked to suggest, rather lightheartedly, that disaffection is merely a temporary phenomenon. This tendency is especially pronounced among some of the prominent scholars of recent democratization in developing countries. Samuel Huntington, for example, argues that people’s disillusionment with political leaders in recently democratized countries is “in a sense, a measure of their success,” because it shows that leaders of anti-authoritarian movements learned to moderate their demands.<sup>9</sup> Referring to the same phenomenon, Ronald Inglehart and Gabriela Catterberg wittily call it a “post-honeymoon period of decline” that reflects “a period effect rather than a persisting value shift.”<sup>10</sup>

This line of diagnosis is not only inadequate (it can explain neither why disaffection persists after twenty years after democratization in many new democracies nor why it plagues old democracies like the United States) but also blinding insofar as it distracts our attention away from a more enduring and coherent historical dynamic working behind democratic disaffection. My major contention, which I will unfold in the course of my dissertation, is that a unique frame of democracy that emerged and evolved in the postwar era has *systemic* tendencies to produce democratic disaffection.<sup>11</sup> I term this frame “instrumental democracy” to denote how democracy

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<sup>9</sup> Samuel Huntington acknowledges that the third wave is often met with people’s disillusionment, stating, “Few political leaders who put together the compromises creating [democratic] regimes escaped the charge of having ‘sold out’ the interests of their constituents.” According to Huntington, however, popular disaffection is “in a sense, a measure of their success,” because it demonstrates that leaders of the opposition learned to moderate their demands to gain power. Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 165, 169, 171.

<sup>10</sup> Ronald Inglehart and Gabriela Catterberg. “Trends in Political Action: The Developmental Trend and the Post-Honeymoon Decline,” *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 43(3) (2002): 300-316, 306.

<sup>11</sup> I use the term “the postwar era” more broadly than its common usage: it includes not only the years immediately following the end of World War II but the period going well into the late twentieth century. This somewhat unconventional periodization is intended to highlight the continuity of historical

is reduced to an instrument that merely legitimizes, rather than contests or renegotiates, political goals predetermined by elites and technocrats who lack democratic legitimacy as well as accountability. Instrumental democracy perceives democratic demands from below as a threat to political stability and represses those demands, creating a gap between democratic institutions and democratic aspirations. It hinges on centralization of power and, as its correlate, demobilization of the demos. Within its framework, security and economic freedom always work together as the organizing—or more precisely, disorganizing—principles of democratic politics. My primary objective is to draw a blueprint, as it were, of instrumental democracy as a system and to show democratic disaffection exists as an effect inherent to its working. In other words, the connection between instrumental democracy and democratic disaffection I draw is a *systemic*, not *empirical*, one. Unlike social scientists, I do not aim to isolate instrumental democracy as a controllable variable independent of history or to establish empirical causal chains between it and democratic disaffection. Doing so would run the risk of reifying and distorting reality for the sake of theoretical consistency, the danger to which positivism often succumbs. I approach instrumental democracy not as a preconceived idea that simply *explains* the world but as a historical force that *constitutes* the world and democratic disaffection its systemic effect. And I examine the empirical unfolding of instrumental democracy not to “prove” my “hypothesis” but to trace the working of instrumental democracy *in* history, namely, in the realm of inevitable contingencies.

Constitutive elements of instrumental democracy I identify in the postwar era are by no means unprecedented. Ever since Plato likened the demos to a lawless and easily manipulated beast whose endless desire for freedom drags democracy into a

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conditions and forces giving rise to and sustaining instrumental democracy. Thus understood, the postwar era has not come to an end yet.



tyranny, students of democracy struggled to devise ways of taming that beast to save it from its own destructive tendencies. James Madison, to take one prominent example, famously wrote in *The Federalist Papers*: “In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself.”<sup>12</sup> All the intricate institutional mechanisms Madison installed into American democracy, then, may be seen as his attempt to instrumentalize democratic politics. However, if the desire to make the demos manageable is as old as democracy itself, never before the postwar era did that desire materialize so systematically and with such a focus so as to form a coherent frame of democracy. Technological, socioeconomic, and cultural resources necessary for that materialization were acquired only by undergoing the great wars of the twentieth century, especially the Cold War.

Individual elements of instrumental democracy have not gone unnoticed. In fact, the arguably dominant strand of democratic theory today—which I call the “rationalist paradigm” for its valorization of rational deliberation—can be seen as a critical response to a certain instrumental vision of democracy.<sup>13</sup> But by focusing on the development of normative guidelines for democratic deliberation, the rationalist paradigm fails to construct a comprehensive picture of instrumental democracy as a powerful historical force. As a result, the rationalist paradigm blinds us to the arguably most serious pathology of instrumental democracy, which, as I have suggested, involves the systematic production of democratic disaffection. Even when it is forced to recognize the crucial role of affect in the functioning of reason, the rationalist

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<sup>12</sup> James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Isaac Kraminck (New York: Penguin, 1987), No. 51, 320.

<sup>13</sup> For example, Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, two prominent advocates of deliberative democracy, distinguish their theory from what they call “aggregative theories of democracy.” According to Gutmann and Thompson’s description, aggregative theories reduce democracy to voting or calculating mechanisms that question neither people’s preferences nor the methods of aggregation. Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, *Why Deliberative Democracy?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 13-21.

paradigm simply presumes the sound existence of affective qualities required for deliberation. But my analysis of the history of postwar democracy indicates that it is exceedingly difficult to sustain such a presumption, as the ascendance of instrumental democracy not only makes the working of democracy increasingly irrelevant to ordinary people but also undermines people's disposition to cultivate democratic ways of life. These historical findings, then, compel us to undertake a more sustained conceptualization of the affective dimension of democratic politics. I take on that task by reinterpreting the work of Hannah Arendt. Reading her insightful yet vague claims in light of the theories of Heidegger and Marx, I reconstruct a critique of democratic disaffection as a major symptom of instrumental democracy. By engaging in a mutually constitutive dialogue between theory and history, I aim to identify and challenge one of the most formidable yet underappreciated trends of our time that impoverishes the understanding and practice of democracy.

This introduction is divided into three parts. In the first section, I discuss how contemporary democratic theory has yet to fully explore the concept of affect. The limited or failed understanding of affect makes some of the dominant accounts of democracy theoretically incoherent and keeps them from interrogating historical conditions upon which they rest. I address this problem throughout my dissertation, and here I explain my own approach to affect that frames it. In the second section, I outline my analysis of the affective basis of democracy in the postwar era. I examine the historical emergence of instrumental democracy during the Cold War and demonstrate, through an analysis of behavioralism and rational choice theory, that instrumental democracy has systematic tendencies to produce democratic disaffection. I then trace how instrumental democracy evolves in the later phase of the postwar era. Taking democratization in Chile and South Korea as exemplary cases, I investigate how the global spread of democracy in the late twentieth century was dictated by the

terms of a new world order, namely, neoliberalism. That democracy was instrumentalized by the neoliberal restructuring of social relations, I contend, accounts for widespread disaffection plaguing post-transition politics in Chile and South Korea. In the last section, I sketch how I develop a theoretical account of the affective basis of democratic politics. Elucidating Arendt's central yet enigmatic concepts "world alienation" and "the social" through the lens of Heidegger's anti-foundational ontology and Marx's analysis of capitalism, I interpret Arendt to illustrate, insightfully yet incompletely, that democracy fundamentally relies on a specific set of affective dispositions toward publicness and that those dispositions are structurally displaced in the postwar world. I end with a brief summary of the organization of my dissertation.

### **Democratic Theory and the Claims of Affect**

The looming manifestation of democratic disaffection not only challenges the uncritical celebration of Western liberal democracy as the final destination of human history but makes us question some of our deeply held theoretical premises about democracy. Reflecting the skepticism, if not hostility, toward the affective dimension of human life that has a long history in political philosophy,<sup>14</sup> the rationalist paradigm in democratic theory has focused almost exclusively on reason as the normative foundation of democracy, while paying marginal attention to the category of affect. Represented by such influential neo-Kantians as John Rawls and Jürgen Habermas, the rationalist paradigm tends to shun affect as an unpredictable matter and, at best, treats affect as a subsidiary that should be tamed and guided to support the working of reason. In consequence, the rationalist paradigm fails to understand how affect works with reason, not as a subsidiary but as an equally constitutive force, in establishing and

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<sup>14</sup> Cheryl Hall, *Trouble with Passion: Political Theory Beyond the Reign of Reason* (New York: Routledge, 2005), chap. 3.

realizing norms of democratic politics. Also, the rationalist paradigm is oblivious to how affect—and reason, too, insofar as its working is inextricably intertwined with affect—is structured by historically specific institutions, norms, and practices. By failing to interrogate the historical ground of their theoretical premises, the rationalist paradigm runs the risk of building a sand castle.

While recent years are witnessing almost an explosion of interest in the concept of affect in various fields, political implications of affect have yet to be fully explored.<sup>15</sup> In moral and political theory, the debate over affect takes place, roughly, around two related clusters of themes. On the one hand, some scholars are concerned primarily with explicating the *nature* of affect as compared to reason. For example,

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<sup>15</sup> In philosophy, there are various schools of thought that emphasize different aspects of affect. Some highlight cognitive capacities of affect. Martha Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); idem., *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Robert C. Solomon, *The Passions: The Myth and Nature of Human Emotion* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1976); Jerome Neu, *A Tear is an Intelligent Thing: The Meaning of Emotion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). Others focus on how affect shapes our perception. Ronald de Sousa, *The Rationality of Emotion* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987); Amélie Rorty, "Explaining Emotions," in *Explaining Emotions*, ed. Amélie Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980). Still others emphasize the visceral aspect of affect. Silvan Tomkins, "What Are Affects?" in *Shame and Its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader*, eds. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 33-74; Robert Zajonc, "On the Primacy of Affect," in *Approaches to Emotion*, eds. Klaus R Scherer and Paul Ekman (Hillsdale, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates, 1984), 259-270. In neuroscience, Antonio Damasio's pioneering work has brought to light the affective dimension of consciousness. Antonio R. Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: HarperCollins, 2000); idem., *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (New York: Harcourt, 2003); see also Joseph LeDoux, *The Emotional Brain: The Mysterious Underpinnings of Emotional Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996). In political science, there are attempts to incorporate affect into the theory of political judgment. Most notable is the collaborative work of George Marcus, W. Russell Neuman, and Michael Mackuen. See their two edited volumes: *The Affective Intelligence and Political Judgment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); *The Affect Effect: Dynamics of Emotion in Political Thinking and Behavior* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). In rational choice theory, see Jon Elster, *Alchemies of the Mind: Rationality and the Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). In the humanities, notable works include, among many others: Brian Massumi, *Parables of the Virtual* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), esp. 23-45; Sianne Ngai, *Ugly Feelings* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005); Charles Altieri, *The Particulars of Rapture: The Aesthetics of the Affects* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Rei Terada, *Feeling in Theory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Jonathan Flatley, *Affective Mapping: Melancholia and the Politics of Modernism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

Martha Nussbaum, one of the most influential defenders of emotion, emphasizes the cognitive or rational nature of emotions. As she puts it, “emotions always involve thought of an object combined with thought of the object’s salience or importance ... [T]hey always involve appraisal or evaluation.”<sup>16</sup> In contrast, William Connolly highlights the pre-cognitive or visceral nature of affect that translates sensorial material into “new things” that disrupt existing forms of representation and conceptualization, thereby challenging reason to expand its boundaries or to transform its organizing principles. As he states, “affect is involved in that tricky process by which the outside of thought is translated into thought.”<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, a growing number of moral and political theorists begin to pay increasing attention to the *role* of affect. A number of feminist scholars, for instance, champion “care” as opposed to impartiality as the governing principle of moral life.<sup>18</sup> Simon Blackburn emphasizes the principal role of passion, especially what he calls “concern,” in practical reasoning.<sup>19</sup> Michael Walzer recognizes the inexorable and crucial involvement of passion in politics.<sup>20</sup> And Sharon Krause examines the role of affect in democratic deliberation.<sup>21</sup>

While these are important contributions to which I am indebted in developing my own account of affect, I depart from them by highlighting the social configuration

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<sup>16</sup> Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 23.

<sup>17</sup> William E. Connolly, *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 64-77, quote at 71.

<sup>18</sup> Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982); Virginia Held, *Feminist Morality: Transforming Culture, Society, and Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

<sup>19</sup> Simon Blackburn, *Ruling Passions: A Theory of Practical Reasoning* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

<sup>20</sup> Michael Walzer, “Passion and Politics,” *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 28(6) (2002): 617-633; idem., *Politics and Passion: Toward a More Egalitarian Liberalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

<sup>21</sup> Sharon Krause, *Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and Democratic Deliberation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008). See also Michael E. Morrill, *Empathy and Democracy: Feeling, Thinking, and Deliberation* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 2010); Cheryl Hall, “Recognizing the Passion in Deliberation: Toward a More Democratic Theory of Deliberative Democracy,” *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 22(4) (2007): 81-95.

of affect. Before explaining my own approach to affect, however, a clarification of the term “affect” is in order. At the present moment, it is almost impossible to find a clear, let alone agreed-upon, definition of affect. Different theorists who are broadly interested in the affective dimension of politics tend to use various analogous terms such as feeling, emotion, affect, mood, and passion without sufficient conceptual clarity. To make matters worse, conceptual distinctions are sometimes drawn too sharply—a tendency that seems to be driven more by broad theoretical persuasions than by conceptual necessities—causing unproductive confusion. A particularly murky, if heated, dispute seems to be going on with regard to the distinction between the terms “emotion” and “affect.” Nussbaum, a champion of emotion, offers a cognitive definition of the term, contrasting it to the view that understands emotions as “bodily” or “un-reasoning” movements.<sup>22</sup> Advocates of affect, such as Brian Massumi, define affect as “intensity” which is “unassimilable” in contradistinction to emotion as “intensity owned and realized” or “the conventional, consensual point of insertion of intensity into semantically and semiotically formed progressions, into narrativizable action-reaction circuits, into function and meaning.”<sup>23</sup> To the best of my knowledge, there is little evidence to support this confusing splitting of the affective into emotion and affect.<sup>24</sup> And I fail to see any legitimate reason or practical use for this bifurcated conceptualization. As I understand it, the affective is significant precisely because it bridges cognitive and visceral registers; it does not warrant a privileging of one in favor of the other.

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<sup>22</sup> Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 24-25.

<sup>23</sup> Brian Massumi, “The Autonomy of Affect,” in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, ed. Paul Patton (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 221.

<sup>24</sup> To get a sense of the terminological confusion plaguing the current debate, consider the following fact: William James, who is often cited as the pioneering theorist of affect (with an emphasis on the visceral), used the term “emotion.” William James, “What is an Emotion?” in *What is an Emotion?* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, ed. Robert C. Solomon (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 65-76.

Throughout my dissertation, I define affect as vitality produced in reaction to sensorial stimuli, empirical and imagined, that initiates, directs, and sustains movements of thought—cognition, reflection, and evaluation—and produces tendencies toward action.<sup>25</sup> The theory of Silvan Tomkins, a pioneer of affect theory in psychology, helps articulate some of the key attributes of affect. Challenging Freud’s then dominant theory of the drives as an account of “human nature,” Tomkins posits that affect exists as a primary motivational system in addition to, and independently of, biological drives. Babies cry for attention, for example, not simply because they are hungry but because they wish to form a communion. Thus understood, the concept of affect constitutes a breakthrough in our understanding of human freedom. If we can only accept or reject drive theory, human existence is either completely bound by natural needs (radically determinate) or totally free from such needs (radically contingent). But with affect, which allows us far more freedom than the drives do (e.g., we cannot stay long without food, but can withstand the absence of excitement for quite some time), we can understand the complexity of our freedom, which involves interaction with and adaptation to the environment.<sup>26</sup> Illustrating this concept of freedom *for* learning and adaptation, Tomkins asks an interesting question: “How does the burnt child learn to avoid the flame in the absence of the pain which is presumably what he is avoiding?” His answer is “anticipation” which he describes to be a fundamentally affective process. Remembering what happened in the past is not enough for the child to complete his learning process. As Tomkins puts it, “[w]hat is remembered must be compelling here and now. The individual must care, if he is to act on his anticipation.”<sup>27</sup> In this sense, “[a]nticipation necessarily requires the linking

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<sup>25</sup> For the sake of consistency, I primarily use the term “affect” throughout my discussion but, when necessary, I do not refrain from using the term “emotion” synonymously.

<sup>26</sup> Silvan Tomkins, “What Are Affects?,” 46-48.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

of past experience with present affect. The burnt child can shun the flame only if he is now afraid of it.”<sup>28</sup>

Tomkins’ theory of affect provides powerful insights into the nature and role of affect. But as briefly noted above, I am interested additionally in the social or relational existence of affect.<sup>29</sup> To illustrate, suppose that a driver sees a policeman and is afraid. We would not say that this fear is intrinsic to the driver or to the policeman. Fear comes into being only when the driver catches the policeman in her sight. In other words, specific affects do not belong to us (subject) or to the stimuli coming from the external world (object) as some kind of property. Rather, it is a movement that *occurs* through the encounter between the subject and the object. And insofar as the encounter between the subject and the object is *socially structured* (though not determined), so is affect. This, of course, is not to suggest that affects are newly created by our social environment. Undoubtedly we are naturally capable of experiencing such affects as excitement, fear, surprise, anger, and so on.<sup>30</sup> Rather, it means that we experience particular affects *in relation to* certain situations and objects. In other words, affects are reflective of our socially structured relationship to the world and, to that extent, socially distributed or configured.<sup>31</sup> To experience fear, the driver

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>29</sup> Tomkins, too, suggested (though never developed) the idea that affect is socialized. “The Socialization of Affect and the Resultant Ideo-Affective Postures Which Evoke Resonance to the Ideological Polarity,” in Silvan Tomkins, *Exploring Affect: The Selected Writings of Silvan S. Tomkins*, ed. E. Virginia Demos (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 168-195.

<sup>30</sup> Tomkins identifies nine basic affects: shame, disgust, excitement, joy, fear, anger, surprise, distress, and contempt. But I am not concerned with determining which affects are basic and which are derivative.

<sup>31</sup> The “social constructivist” approach in social psychology and anthropology highlights this aspect of affect. For notable accounts, see: James R. Averill, “A Constructivist View of Emotion,” in *Emotion: Theory, Research, and Experience, Vol. 1: Theories of Emotion*, eds. Robert Plutchik and Henry Kellerman, (New York: Academic Press, 1980), 305-339; Rom Harré, ed., *The Social Construction of Emotions* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986); Arlie Russell Hochschild, “Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structures,” *American Journal of Sociology* 85 (1979): 551-575; Catherine Lutz, *Unnatural Emotions* (Chicago: University Chicago Press, 1988); Richard A. Shweder and Robert Alan LeVine, eds., *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self, and Emotion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984).



must have a deeply entrenched sense as regards when one is supposed to be fearful of the policeman, let alone what a policeman is or how to tell if someone is a policeman. If she grew up in a neighborhood where crimes were rampant and the police presence constant, she might be more readily fearful. Thus, the driver's fear evidences that she has internalized, among other things, legal institutions, social norms, and her past experiences. Affect, in short, acknowledges the affectedness of our being.<sup>32</sup>

In failing to fully appreciate the socially configured nature of affect, the current literature on affect stops short of addressing what I take to be the most fundamental problem of the rationalist paradigm. While growing interest in affect shifts the *focus* of analysis from reason to affect, it has yet to challenge the *frame* of analysis that constructs an idealized theory upon a transhistorical category. As noted, and as I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 1, the rationalist paradigm's universal, reasonable norms rely on specific affective qualities. Despite this essential reliance, however, the rationalist paradigm does not pay sufficient attention to the power-laden process surrounding the (re)structuring of its affective basis, blinding us to the working of power relations and thereby compromising the strength of its normative principles. To develop a more rigorous theory of democracy, we need to examine affect not only as a theoretical category but also as a historical category—how it is mobilized, demobilized, circulated, reoriented, or displaced by historically specific social conditions and political practices.

## **A Genealogy of Postwar Democracy**

I interrogate the affective basis of democracy with a specific focus on the postwar era because, as I will explain shortly, democracy underwent a profound

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<sup>32</sup> This does not mean that affect is merely a passive indicator of our affectedness. As I will elaborate in Chapter 1, affect is also an active force that reinforces or challenges our relationship to the world.

reconstruction in that period. Unearthing the postwar reconstruction of democracy requires a great deal of historical work, but my investigation is not concerned exclusively with searching for what happened in the past. As I understand it, history and theory are inextricably intertwined with each other and thus historical analysis cannot be divorced from philosophical inquiry—and vice versa. As I will demonstrate throughout my dissertation, both normative and empirical theories of democracy rely on specific assumptions and judgment about history, whereas historical “facts” about postwar democracy take effect and survive oblivion to the extent that they are incorporated into, and made coherent by, theories. History and theory, in short, are mutually constitutive.

In trying to weave theory and history, I draw insights from Michel Foucault and Walter Benjamin. Foucault develops a historical method that he calls “genealogy.” Challenging the conventional historical method that constructs a linear progressive line that extends seamlessly from the past to the present, he suggests we study how the past contains multiple paths that had a potential to become the present and yet were suppressed by power relations. Thus understood, genealogy enables us to interrogate the assumptions that are taken for granted in the present. As Wendy Brown has put it, “[t]he political value of genealogy lies in its ability to call into question the most heavily naturalized features and encrusted relations of the present, to expose as a consequence of power what is ordinarily conceived as divinely, teleologically, or naturally ordained.”<sup>33</sup> By constructing a genealogy of postwar democracy, I trace the process through which particular assumptions about democracy—which hold, among others, that democracy is a mechanism that aggregates individual preferences—become naturalized as *the* definition of democracy and, in doing so, reexamine their validity. Benjamin also refuses to view history as a linear progression, which, for him,

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<sup>33</sup> Wendy Brown, *Politics Out of History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 118.

is but a myth created by the victors of history. He envisions an approach to history that recuperates previously suppressed, forgotten, and underrepresented voices in order to create tensions within existing power relations and open up room for alternative visions. My analysis of the Third World movement and the struggle for democracy in Chile and South Korea is informed and motivated by my understanding of Benjamin's method.

My genealogy of postwar democracy begins with political changes during and immediately after the Second World War. The unexpectedly formidable rise of Fascism and Nazism created a tremendous sense of threat among advocates of democracy. Unlike traditional dictatorships, Fascism and Nazism seemed, at least initially, capable of eliciting (rather than mobilizing through coercion) popular support even as they perpetrated atrocious violence against large segments of the population. The term "totalitarianism" was newly coined to grapple with the novel and puzzling character of these regimes, and many came to regard the people—often called, derisively, "the masses" in the postwar years—as the source of totalitarianism. As noted, students of democracy have always been wary of the people. And commentators began to note the dangers of mass society as early as in the eighteenth century and especially in the early twentieth century.<sup>34</sup> However, it was the association of the masses with totalitarianism that effected a fundamental reconstruction of democracy in a way that systematically excludes and displaces people from the political arena. This imperative to dissolve the demos, I suggest, constitutes a major driving force of instrumental democracy. Of course, there are other significant factors that contributed to the emergence of instrumental democracy. Two

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<sup>34</sup> For a discussion of how the concept of "the masses" took shape during the French Revolution, see Stefan Jonsson, "The Invention of the Masses: The Crowd in French Culture from the Revolution to the Commune," in *Crowds*, eds. Jeffrey T Schnapp and Matthew Tiews (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 47-75.

of them merit special attention. First, in the postwar years, intellectual arguments as well as a network of people were formed around the idea that correlates, if not equates, democracy with unfettered capitalism. Second, the Second World War and the ensuing Cold War gave rise to highly sophisticated theories and technologies that treat society as a self-adjusting mechanism and individuals its units, both of which can and should be managed “scientifically” by experts. While there were no immediate affinities between these factors and, indeed, they were sometimes in conflict with each other, anti-totalitarianism fused them into a frame of instrumental democracy.

While these historical forces do reveal certain tendencies of instrumental democracy, their combined working is neither readily clear nor entirely coherent because other historically contingent factors operated to suppress or delay their complete manifestation. The postwar economic boom, for example, made possible a broad consensus on modestly regulated capitalism, restraining the forces in favor of unfettered capitalism for decades. Anti-totalitarianism, too, was challenged in the midst of the protests against the Vietnam War and subsided during *Détente*, if only to aggressively reappear in the 1980s. Thus in order to understand ramifications of instrumental democracy more precisely, we need to examine a more systematic articulation of its logics. I suggest that self-proclaimed “scientific” theories of democracy, which gained enormous influence in the postwar years, provide such systematic accounts of instrumental democracy. Treated not as methodological orientations but as symptomatic articulations of Cold War imperatives, two most prominent theories in this period—behavioralism and rational choice theory—help elucidate the logics of instrumental democracy. In stark contrast to democratic theories in earlier decades, behavioralism and rational choice theory discount the significance of political participation and concern with public matters. They not only fail to interrogate but, in fact, *legitimize* political apathy, either as a means to restrain the

irrational force of the masses or as the outcome of individuals' rational calculation. Translating historically contingent and normatively charged assumptions into "scientific" postulates upon which an allegedly factual account of democracy is constructed, behavioralism and rational choice theory effectively serve to naturalize instrumental democracy. This is not simply a matter of academic discourse, as the formalized model of instrumental democracy assumed a significant place in the broader project of modernization which defined American foreign policy toward developing countries during the Cold War. To be sure, the modernization project (and behavioral and rational choice accounts of democracy as part of it) experienced serious setbacks and failures and encountered formidable challenges and critiques. Nonetheless, basic suppositions about democracy codified by behavioralism and rational choice theory would remain essentially intact, as I will show with theories of democratization and social capital.

Woven into the genealogy of postwar democracy, social science discourses on democracy serve to crystallize the otherwise muddled development of instrumental democracy and give us insights into its future direction. Moreover, my analysis of the social sciences compels us to reflect on the nature of social inquiry. If the rationalist paradigm fails to examine the empirical assumptions upon which its endeavor relies at the risk of undermining the validity of its normative principles, scientific theories of democracy seem to commit an exact opposite fallacy: they fail to interrogate normative assumptions guiding their study, effectively promoting the normative vision growing out of specific historical conditions in their apparent effort to explain empirical reality.

Having emerged in the mid-century, instrumental democracy evolves in the late twentieth century. I trace this evolution by comparing the "Third World" and the "Third Wave." The term "Third World" denotes revolutionary movements in post-

colonial societies and gained prominence after the 1955 Asian-African conference in Bandung, Indonesia. The term “Third Wave,” popularized by political scientist Samuel Huntington, refers to the global spread of democracy that occurred between 1974 and 1990. The comparison of the Third World and the Third Wave, both of which were characterized by strong popular demands for self-rule in their initial stage, makes us wonder, because the reaction of the United States to those events was curiously different. Up until the early 1980s, the United States frequently intervened in the Third World to maintain its hegemony and was not reluctant to do so against democratically elected governments, as evidenced in Iran (1953), Guatemala (1954), Indonesia (1958), Chile (1973), and Nicaragua (1981). Why, then, did the United States not suppress democratic demands expressed in the Third Wave? Why did the United States suddenly decide to assume the role of democracy-promoter in the 1980s? Had democracy somehow become “safe” for freedom and the world order?

In part, this shift can be attributed to the fact that the Vietnam War and the Iran-Contra affair made U.S. foreign intervention morally unpalatable and politically costly. But more importantly, the diverging fate of the Third World and the Third Wave is indicative of broader geopolitical change in the late twentieth century. In this respect, it is significant that the Third Wave coincided with another decisive historical event: neoliberal globalization. As I will examine more closely in Chapter 4, neoliberalism was not a change in the economic realm alone. It marked a radical departure from the New Deal vision of society that aspires to link the public control of capital, social welfare policies, and democratic politics. Once adopted by developed countries and multilateral lending institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank, neoliberalism quickly became a global doctrine, in part because Third World economies became at once more vulnerable to the fluctuation of transnational capital and dependent on lender countries. Third Wave governments’ vulnerable and

dependent position in the neoliberal world order severely constrained their ability to respond to popular demands and circumscribed their newly established democracy. If anti-totalitarianism worked as the major driving force of instrumental democracy whereas unfettered capitalism remained a less palpable factor during the Cold War, in the late twentieth century the neoliberal strand of global capitalism came to play a far more central role in reinforcing and disseminating instrumental democracy.

I illustrate the instrumentalization of Third Wave democracies by examining democratization in Chile and South Korea. A comparison of Chile and South Korea is particularly useful in analyzing the intertwinement of democracy and neoliberalism in the late twentieth century. They are often touted as two of the most successful cases of Third Wave democratization in terms of implementing and maintaining stable democratic institutions.<sup>35</sup> Their experience is all the more dramatic because they peacefully transitioned to democracy from probably two of the most draconian and powerful authoritarian regimes. Also, democratization in Chile and South Korea went hand in hand with remarkably successful capitalist development. Chile and South Korea are outward-oriented economies dependent on transnational finance capital and open markets for their exports to advanced countries. In other words, they were under great pressure to liberalize their economy in accordance with the hegemonic international norm—i.e., neoliberalism—and they complied thoroughly. Thus, they provide helpful venues through which to assess the political consequences of integration into the neoliberal phase of global capitalism. Moreover, Chile and South Korea allow us to explore two different modes of neoliberalism's global diffusion. If

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<sup>35</sup> According to the Freedom House ratings most widely used by scholarship to measure the level of democratic consolidation, Chile and South Korea are the “freest” among the Third Wave countries both in terms of political rights and civil liberties (<http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=363>). Discussing the deteriorating quality of third wave democracies in the 1990s, Larry Diamond pointed out South Korea and Chile as “notable exceptions.” Larry Diamond, “Is the Third Wave over?” *Journal of Democracy* 7(3) (1996), 27-28.

Chile shows a more conventional Cold War path in adopting neoliberal policies under the counter-revolutionary local government backed by the United States, South Korea illustrates a characteristic post-Cold War pattern in undergoing a neoliberal makeover under the guidance of the IMF.

The experiences of Chile and South Korea compel us to question the allegedly happy marriage of electoral democracy and capitalism that is widely celebrated after the end of the Cold War. In both countries, the combined process of democratic institutionalization and the neoliberal restructuring of social relations produced a reality at odds with the popular vision of democracy formed, if incompletely, during the anti-authoritarian struggle. Chile and South Korea prove to be illuminating examples in analyzing this disjuncture, as democratization in both countries was driven by arguably the highest level of popular mobilization. Forming an alliance with intellectuals, workers, students, and dissident politicians, people in Chile and South Korea did not passively receive but actively demanded democracy with a vision of their own. But after their demand for democracy has seemingly been realized, they show signs of widespread disaffection.<sup>36</sup> I argue that this curious transformation of democratic aspirations into democratic disaffection stems primarily from the gap between the *vision* of democracy formed during the struggle for democracy and the *reality* of democracy experienced after the transition. As I will demonstrate in Chapter 4, what emerged at the end of the fraught struggle for democracy in both Chile and South Korea was a variant of instrumental democracy that alienates and displaces, rather than accommodates, people's democratic demands.

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<sup>36</sup> For Chile, see Paul W. Posner, *State, Market, and Democracy in Chile: The Constraint of Popular Participation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 83-87. For South Korea, see Doh Chull Shin, "Mass Politics, Public Opinion, and Democracy in Korea," in *Korea's Democratization*, ed. Samuel Kim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 47-78.



## **A Theory of the Affective Basis of Democracy**

The genealogy of postwar democracy shows that, as opposed to the rationalist paradigm's presumption, the affective basis of democracy is seriously undermined in the postwar era by the ascendance of instrumental democracy. This recognition, then, compels us to develop a theoretical perspective that acknowledges the affective dimension of democratic politics. For that purpose, I turn to the work of Hannah Arendt. Arendt was one of the few thinkers who lived the Cold War and yet refused to succumb to its binaries and imperatives. Like many of those who lived in the traumatic aftermath of World War II, Arendt's thought was profoundly influenced by her experience of totalitarianism. But the lesson she gleaned from that experience was radically opposed to what was fashionable in Cold War America: she identified a specific kind of *depoliticization*—the disappearance of the public sphere, the dissolution of collectivities, and crucially, the decline of people's democratic dispositions—as the most serious threat to democratic politics. While she first gave shape to this problem through her analysis of totalitarianism, Arendt believed depoliticizing tendencies that gave rise to, and were exploited by, totalitarianism did not disappear along with the demise of totalitarian governments but plagued the modern world more generally. And her principal concern, I suggest, was to understand the *nature* and the *origin* of that depoliticization—two integral yet underexplored themes figuring, respectively, in her concepts of “world alienation” and “the social.” Elaborated with a focus on these two concepts, Arendt's political theory offers an insightful, if underdeveloped, critique of instrumental democracy that can help us come to terms with, and challenge, the still ongoing development of instrumental democracy and, as one of its major symptoms, democratic disaffection.

Inasmuch as Arendt helps us explore the connection between instrumental democracy and democratic disaffection with theoretical generality, the genealogy of

postwar democracy provides an essential interpretative lens through which to elucidate vague and enigmatic aspects of her thinking. In particular, reconstructing her political theory as a critique of instrumental democracy and democratic disaffection enables us to navigate the tension at the center of her political theory—the tension reflected in a rather bifurcated reception of her work. On the one hand, Arendt is known as a theorist of “action” which is, for her, synonymous with freedom and politics as such.<sup>37</sup> Focusing on her unique conceptualization of action, some valorize Arendt’s political theory as a defense of participatory and agonistic politics,<sup>38</sup> while others charge that her “dramaturgical” view of action is ultimately of “decisionistic” or irrational nature and “aestheticizes” politics, namely, promotes politics for the sake of politics without considering morality or justice.<sup>39</sup> In highlighting the dynamic dimension of Arendt’s theory, however, admirers and detractors alike tend to underplay or bypass the emphasis she consistently places on what she calls the “common world.” On the other hand, some of her readers who do recognize Arendt’s emphasis on the common world tend to interpret her theory exclusively as an attempt to seek consensus or preserve public institutions at the risk of ignoring her distinct contributions to political theory including her concepts of plurality and natality (unexpected beginnings).<sup>40</sup> In my view,

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<sup>37</sup> The action-freedom-politics triad appears time and again throughout Arendt’s corpus. For a particularly concise formulation, see: “The *raison d’être* of politics is freedom, and its field of experience is action.” Hannah Arendt, “Politics and Freedom: A Lecture,” *Chicago Review* 14(1) (1960), 28.

<sup>38</sup> For the participatory reading of Arendt, see Jeffrey C. Isaac, “Oases in the Desert: Hannah Arendt on Democratic Politics,” *American Political Science Review* 88(1) (1994): 156-168; Maurizio Passerin d’Entrèves, *The Political Philosophy of Hannah Arendt* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994). For the agonistic interpretation of Arendt, see the critical exchange between Dana R. Villa and Bonnie Honig in *Political Theory*. Dana R. Villa, “Beyond Good and Evil: Arendt, Nietzsche, and the Aestheticization of Political Action,” *Political Theory* 20(2) (1992): 274-308; Bonnie Honig, “The Politics of Agonism: A Critical Response to Dana R. Villa,” *Political Theory* 21(3) (1993): 528-533.

<sup>39</sup> Martin Jay, “Political Existentialism of Hannah Arendt (1978),” in *Permanent Exiles: Essays on the Intellectual Migration from Germany to America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 237-256. This critique is closely related to another line of criticism that sees in Arendt’s political theory “elitist” and “anti-democratic” elements. Sheldon S. Wolin, “Hannah Arendt: Democracy and the Political,” *Salmagundi* 60 (Spring-Summer 1983): 3-19.

<sup>40</sup> For the consensual reading of Arendt, Jürgen Habermas, “Hannah Arendt: On the Concept of Power (1976),” in *Philosophical-Political Profiles* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983), 171-187.

both participatory/agonistic and consensual readings of Arendt highlight one aspect of her thought and suppress the other, failing to fully explore the productive tension or symbiotic relationship between the political continuity grounded in the common world and the unpredictability generated by human action.

I suggest that, in Arendt's political thinking, public institutions and public actions are not fundamentally opposed but mediated by public sentiments and dispositions.<sup>41</sup> For Arendt, both institutions and actions are sustained and animated by the same set of dispositions to *preserve* and *recreate* publicness, which she variably calls "the common world," "the public sphere," or "the space of appearance." From this perspective, the counterproductive opposition between institutions and actions are not a theoretical necessity but a *historically contingent phenomenon* caused by the decay of public sentiments and dispositions, namely, democratic disaffection.<sup>42</sup> And Arendt's critique of the "the social" points to a historically specific *structural* dynamic that produces democratic disaffection—a dynamic inherent in modernity and manifesting itself aggressively in the postwar era.

For those who are familiar with Arendt's work, my effort to find a theory of democratic disaffection and its structural origin in her ideas might seem ill-advised. For one thing, my claim that Arendt's political theory is centered on an *affective* dimension might sound odd, given that she notoriously criticized one of the most influential affective concepts in the history of political thought—Rousseau's

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<sup>41</sup> For a recent effort to relax the opposition between orderly and disruptive dimensions of democratic politics through a reading of Arendt, see Patchen Markell, "The Rule of the People: Arendt, *Archê*, and Democracy," *American Political Science Review* 100(1) (2006): 1-14. While Markell is interested primarily in challenging the opposition itself, my chief aim is to examine how the opposition is mediated by affective qualities and how that affective mediation is structured in a specific historical context.

<sup>42</sup> Arendt herself seems to indicate this point in the following remark: "Perhaps the very fact that these two elements, the concern with stability and the spirit of the new, have become opposites in political thought and terminology—the one being identified as conservatism and the other being claimed as the monopoly of progressive liberalism—must be recognized to be among the symptoms of our loss [of the revolutionary spirit consisting of public freedom, public happiness, and public spirit]" Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Penguin, 1990 [1963]), 223.

“compassion”—for being partially responsible for the perceived failure of the French Revolution.<sup>43</sup> Also, my attempt to extrapolate an account of the *structural* origin of democratic disaffection from her work might seem equally misguided. Arendt is reputed, as noted, for her celebration of the unpredictability produced by human action. She often resists, if not rejects, structural thinking, as she believes it threatens to overlook and repress human spontaneity. With these objections in mind, I want to be clear about my argument. I do not claim that Arendt has a systematic theory of affect or of structural forces behind the social configuration of affect. Rather, my contention is that she advances and relies on a set of ideas that together enables us to conceptualize the affective basis of democratic politics. These ideas, however, exist in Arendt’s thinking only in a vague and underdeveloped fashion, and I enlist two external sources to flesh out and articulate them: Martin Heidegger and Karl Marx.

Heidegger’s anti-foundational ontology proves to be a key to understanding Arendt’s puzzling conceptualization of world alienation. Defining world alienation as the “decline of the common world,” Arendt never clarifies what she means by the “common world.” Sometimes she refers to tangible institutions and shared objects, but she also implies that the common world has an important affective dimension by positing that our experience of the common world requires what she calls “common

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<sup>43</sup> Arendt wrote: “[T]he actual experiences underlying ... Robespierre’s ‘terror of virtue’ cannot be understood without taking into account the crucial role [Rousseau’s notion of] compassion had come to play in the minds and hearts of those who prepared and of those who acted in the course of the French Revolution.” Ibid., 79. But this should not be taken as a wholesale rejection of the entire realm of affect. Arendt’s critique of compassion stems from her view (with which I disagree) that it is inherently introspective and thus privatized. “Passion and emotions,” Arendt stated, “certainly are located in the human heart ... The qualities of the heart need darkness and protection against the light of the public to grow and to remain what they are meant to be, innermost motives which are not for public display.” Ibid., 95-96. Suggestively, however, while saying that the American Revolution could be successful partly because it was never put to “the test of compassion,” Arendt argued that this “lack of experience gives [American revolutionaries’] theories, even if they are sound, an air of lightheartedness, a certain weightlessness, which may well put into jeopardy their durability.” The Founding Fathers, Arendt insisted, thought only in terms of “bring[ing] ‘irrationality’ of desires and emotions under the control of rationality” which is “wanting in many respects, especially in its facile and superficial equation of thought with reason and of reason with rationality.” Ibid., 95.

sense” as its precondition. Here Arendt’s thinking unmistakably resembles Heidegger’s in its structure. Heidegger postulates that our existence is not defined by foundational qualities such as reason but by our practical involvement with people and things around us. Crucially, he also claims that this involvement is premised on our primary affective attunement with the world. We get involved with the world, he writes, when we “become affected in some way (*Betroffenwerdens*).” Of course, Heidegger’s ontology has deeply apolitical, if not anti-political, implications, and Arendt is keenly aware and severely critical of them. Nonetheless, Heidegger’s account of the fundamentally affective nature of human existence explicates world alienation not simply as an institutional deterioration but as a dispositional and affective decay.

Arendt traces the origin of this dispositional and affective decay in her account of the rise of the social. But as in the case of world alienation, her discussion is confusing and indeterminate even when it is insightful. Arendt laments that political freedom becomes rarified in the modern world as the social dominates human activities. In line with her discussion of world alienation, Arendt discusses the detrimental impact of the social in affective and dispositional terms, insisting that “care for the world” is overshadowed by “care about the self” in the modern world. What is not clear is how, exactly, the social generates this regrettable situation. While Arendt has often been understood to claim that the rise of the social blurs the distinction between the public and private realms, letting private *qua* economic matters intrude on public concerns, she makes clear that the social is a unique force that transforms both the public and private realms. In her sparse yet suggestive remarks on the unique nature of the social, Arendt clearly points to modern capitalism, highlighting in particular the imperative of wealth accumulation and the system of exchange value. But she remains exceedingly vague as to how wealth accumulation

becomes such a formidable social ideal, how exchange value fragments collective subjectivities into isolated individuals, and how both processes facilitate the ascendance of self-care as the dominant disposition. Despite Arendt's attempt to draw a sharp distinction between her ideas and Marx's, I suggest Marx's analysis of capitalism helps elucidate Arendt's account of the social by showing how the imperative of capital accumulation and the universalization of exchange value—two essential dynamics of capitalism—produce a specific form of social relations that structurally turn people's disposition away from the cultivation of their collective power to the endless and purposeless expansion of their private interest.

### **Organization of the Dissertation**

My dissertation is divided into three parts consisting of five chapters. Part I (Chapter 1) examines the affective deficit of the rationalist paradigm. Through a close reading of the works of Rawls and Habermas, I demonstrate that the attempt to conceptualize democratic politics in terms of reason alone is bound to fail, because affect is always and already involved in the working of reason. Rational deliberation—the central mechanism to which both Rawls and Habermas turn in constructing the norms of democratic politics—is in fact predicated on empathic imagination which requires a great deal of affective engagement. Neglecting the role of affect, therefore, runs the risk of impoverishing the ideal of rational deliberation itself. In their attempt to address the problem of motivation, Rawls and Habermas do reveal the extent to which the rationalist paradigm relies on specific affective qualities. However, they simply presume the existence of those qualities, failing to recognize that those affects are closely intertwined with historically specific social structures and power relations. Due to this presumptive gesture toward affect, the rationalist paradigm is unable to account for the problem of disaffection—the possibility that the affective qualities it

(implicitly) requires are eroded by shifting power relations and thus no longer congruent with the experience of people.

Part II (Chapters 2, 3, and 4) constructs a genealogy of postwar democracy. Chapter 2 examines the historical emergence of instrumental democracy in the Cold War context. Anti-totalitarianism played a powerful role in dissolving collectivities into isolated individuals and rendering the idea of the common good inimical to democratic politics. This reconstruction of democracy was complemented and accelerated by the increasingly influential tendency to correlate democracy with the capitalist economy. While this correlation was advertised to protect individual freedom, individuals became less free in the political realm as their capabilities for determining and renegotiating the goals of society were diminished. Some of the most pressing issues such as war and the economic system were often precluded from democratic contestation and decided by a small group of elites. Theories and technologies grown out of the experience of war, both hot and cold, justified and facilitated this elite-centric decision-making process and, further, the “scientific management” of individuals by “experts.” Together, these various forces gave rise to a form of democracy that is no longer a collective pursuit of the common good but an instrument merely legitimizing predetermined goals.

Chapter 3 examines the logics of instrumental democracy by analyzing behavioralism and rational choice theory as symptomatic articulations of Cold War imperatives. Behavioralism and rational choice theory, otherwise quite different and contending approaches, converge in constructing their accounts of democracy on the assumptions deeply entrenched in the Cold War. They conceptualize the common good as a sum of completed and unchallengeable individual preferences, and democracy as a mechanism that merely aggregates and calculates those preferences. Based on this shared premise, behavioralism and rational choice theory clearly

illustrate two distinct dynamics of instrumental democracy, both of which produce disaffection. Behavioralism constricts the scope of democratic contestation even as it celebrates pluralism, alienating those who do not conform to the value consensus presumed to exist in postwar America. Rational choice theory reduces citizens to rational individuals perpetually engaged in cost-benefit analysis. Thus defined, individuals have no reason to participate in democratic politics at all, as it is shown by rational choice theory to be an eminently inefficient way of realizing the preferences of those individuals.

Chapter 4 traces the evolution of instrumental democracy in the late twentieth century. A comparison of the Third Wave and the Third World suggests that the global spread of democracy in the late twentieth century marks not a linear progress toward Western liberal democracy as “the end of history,” but the ascendance of a specific form of political life conforming to a new world order—neoliberal globalization. The political development of Chile and South Korea brightly illustrates this point. During the struggle against authoritarianism, people in both countries envisioned and demanded a fundamental transformation of the system of exclusion and depoliticization on which authoritarianism relied. In this respect, democratic institutionalization was not an isolated goal but a symbol of deeper social, economic, and cultural transformations. But in both Chile and South Korea, this holistic vision of democratization went unrealized. While the authoritarian regimes were dismantled by popular struggles, the transition to democracy was negotiated among the elite with virtually no contributions from the popular sector. Despite the adoption of electoral institutions, the system of exclusion and social fragmentation that undergirded authoritarianism persists, if in a new form, as the neoliberal restructuring of social relations dissolve collective subjectivities into politically deprived individuals.



Finally, Part III (Chapter 5) develops a theoretical account of democratic disaffection by reinterpreting Arendt's political theory. As opposed to the Cold War appropriation of her work, I suggest that Arendt's primary concern was not to condemn the masses as such but to understand underlying factors that produced the masses as the dominant, and dangerous, form of political existence. She found the root cause of "massification" in a specific kind of depoliticization. Believing that this depoliticizing tendency is not peculiar to totalitarianism but inherent in modernity itself, Arendt developed more general, if incomplete, accounts of the nature and origin of that depoliticization with her concepts of "world alienation" and "the social," respectively. I elucidate these crucial yet underexplored concepts by drawing on the insights of Heidegger and Marx. Heidegger's claim that our involvement with the world presupposes primary affective attunement clarifies Arendt's world alienation as the decline of people's affective disposition to create and preserve publicness. Marx's analysis of capitalism enables us to reconstruct Arendt's account of the social as a historical critique of the double-sided structural dynamic—consisting of the imperative of capital accumulation and the universalization of exchange value—which displaces people's public disposition and thereby suppresses the realization of political freedom.

## **PART I**

### **Affect in Democratic Theory Today**

## CHAPTER 1

### **The Claims of Affect: The Affective Deficit of the Rationalist Paradigm**

“[The French] revolution has aroused in the hearts and desires of all spectators who are not themselves caught up in it a *sympathy* which borders almost on enthusiasm, although the very utterance of this sympathy was fraught with danger.”

--Immanuel Kant (1798)<sup>1</sup>

After decades of decline, normative democratic theory began to flourish again in the 1970s.<sup>2</sup> And this revival of political theory has been driven by a renewed interest in the concept of reason and, in democratic theory, by an attempt to ground democratic politics in citizens' reasonable deliberation.<sup>3</sup> Inspired by Kantian moral philosophy, proponents of this rationalist paradigm have been searching for universally valid norms that could provide a foundation for a society defined by complexity and plurality, relying primarily, if not exclusively, on reason. Speaking to its influence, the rationalist paradigm has received wide-ranging criticisms from “communitarians,”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Immanuel Kant, “The Contest of Faculties (1798),” in *Kant: Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss, trans. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 182, emphasis in original.

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of the decline of political theory in the 1950s and the 1960s, see John G. Gunnell, *The Descent of Political Theory: The Genealogy of an American Vocation* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

<sup>3</sup> Observing this trend, one commentator announced a “definitive deliberative turn” in political theory. John S. Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, Contestations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), v. For notable accounts of “deliberative democracy,” see, among many others, Joshua Cohen, “Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy,” in *The Good Polity: Normative Analysis of the State*, eds. Alan Hamlin and Philip Pettit (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 17-34; Jürgen Habermas, “Three Normative Models of Democracy,” in *Democracy and Difference*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 21-30; and Samuel Freeman, “Deliberative Democracy: A Sympathetic Comment,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 29(4) (2000): 371-418.

<sup>4</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, ID: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984); Michael Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Charles Taylor, *Philosophical Papers*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Michael Walzer,

feminists,<sup>5</sup> advocates of “identity politics,”<sup>6</sup> and poststructuralists.<sup>7</sup> While building on these valuable contributions, I approach the rationalist paradigm with a more specific objective: understanding the role of affect in democratic politics. The rationalist paradigm considers affect unreliable, obscure, and even threatening to reason and treats it as a marginal issue. To the extent that democratic disaffection means the absence of affect, it seems to characterize not only postwar democracies but also one of the most influential strands of democratic theory today. But can we really bracket or dispense with affect in conceptualizing and undertaking democratic politics? Is affectless theorization of democracy sustainable? What problems, if any, does it generate?

Taking Rawls and Habermas as the representative figures of the rationalist paradigm, this chapter demonstrates that the attempt to conceptualize democratic politics in terms of reason alone is bound to fail.<sup>8</sup> As my analysis of Rawls’s and

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*Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality* (New York: Basic Books, 1983). The term “communitarian” is loose and somewhat misleading to do justice to the variety and the complexity of these critiques. In fact, all the prominent “communitarians” listed here have expressed their disagreement with the label in one way or another.

<sup>5</sup> Martha C. Nussbaum, “Rawls and Feminism,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Rawls*, ed. Samuel Freeman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 488-520; Nancy Fraser, “What’s Critical about Critical Theory? The Case of Habermas and Gender,” in *Feminism as Critique*, eds., Seyla Benhabib and Drucilla Cornell (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 31-55; Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981); Genevieve Lloyd, *The Man of Reason: ‘Male’ and ‘Female’ in Western Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984); Susan Moller Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1989).

<sup>6</sup> Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).

<sup>7</sup> Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, 2000).

<sup>8</sup> My discussion in this chapter has important resonances with Sharon Krause’s recent work that also uncovers the significance of affect through an engagement with the work of Rawls and Habermas. But while Krause is concerned primarily with conceptualizing affectively informed impartiality, I am more interested in the role of affect in the undertaking of democratic politics and the formation of political subjectivities. Sharon R. Krause, “Desiring Justice: Motivation and Justification in Rawls and Habermas,” *Contemporary Political Theory* 4(4) (2005): 365-385, reprinted in her *Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and Democratic Deliberation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), chap. 1. For another recent study of affect that includes a broad survey of deliberative democracy, see Michael E. Morrell, *Empathy and Democracy: Feeling, Thinking, and Deliberation* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010).

Habermas's account of rational deliberation will make clear, affect is *always* and *already* involved in the working of reason.<sup>9</sup> In developing this argument, I build on the definition of affect advanced in the Introduction and draw a distinction between *reproductive* and *performative* modes of affect in its relation to social structures.<sup>10</sup> On the one hand, when it is fully invested in existing social structures, affect plays a reproductive role and attaches us to those structures. In this case, affect depends on and expresses, however implicitly, preexisting cognitive categories. In our imaginary scene discussed in the Introduction (a driver sees a policeman and is afraid), fear reproduces the driver as a legal subject that voluntarily stays away from trouble and the legal system (represented by the policeman) as a binding and possibly legitimate structure. On the other hand, when we fail to find and maintain fitting affect in our relationship to the world, this "ill-fitting" affect can play a performative role and detaches us from current social structures, stimulating alternative ideas and practices and calling for a change. One day the driver sees the policeman and, all of a sudden, she is outraged. It is as if her body refuses to endure the feeling of fear—bouncing heart, contracting muscles, and nervous twitches—that is yet again overtaking her. Her outrage, then, incites her memory of a newspaper article about protesters being brutally suppressed by the police, which she read a while ago only in passing and

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<sup>9</sup> The neuroscientist Antonio Damasio finds that patients whose ability to experience emotion is impaired due to brain damage have trouble reasoning, especially in personal and social matters, even though their cognitive and intellectual abilities remain intact. According to Damasio's suggestive hypothesis, affective signals that the brain receives from the body (or what Damasio calls "somatic-markers") are integrated into emotions that then operate, say, to alleviate uncertainties involved in reasoning by reducing the number of options from which we choose or to keep knowledge necessary for reasoning active and in focus for an extended time. Antonio R. Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: Putnam, 1994), esp. 83-113, 165-201.

<sup>10</sup> George Marcus's distinction between the "disposition system" and the "surveillance system" as two sub-categories of emotion seems to resonate with my discussion. According to Marcus, both the disposition system and the surveillance system are ways of processing emotional markers. The difference lies in the fact that the disposition system attends to the familiar and induces us to repeat behaviors learned in the past, whereas the surveillance system registers the unfamiliar and alerts us to the inappropriateness of the present situation. George E. Marcus, *The Sentimental Citizen: Emotion in Democratic Politics* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 71-75.

never registered. She now feels as if she was one of those protesters, and takes an urgent and intense interest in their situation. She starts questioning, for the first time in her life, whether it is right for a citizen to be afraid of the state. The world, for her at least, is already changed. Thus understood, the *performative affect* captures the side of affect that cannot be reduced to cognition. If we subsume all the affective states under the cognitive categories, we lose sight of the possibility that affect not only supports but transforms our normative expectations.<sup>11</sup>

The distinction between the reproductive affect and the performative affect helps us analyze the nature of the rationalist paradigm's affective deficit more precisely. The rationalist paradigm does not entirely ignore affect; rather, it contains affect within the reproductive mechanism of the norms already established by reason. In other words, the rationalist paradigm takes into account only the reproductive affect. The rationalist paradigm's selective approach to affect creates significant problems that cannot be navigated within its own framework. For example, the rationalist paradigm is hard pressed to explain how reason alone can establish norms *in the first place*. In fact, a close reading of Rawls and Habermas reveals that they do depend on certain affective qualities in establishing norms. But they presume, rather than theorize, the existence of those performative affects. It is this presumption that leaves Rawls and Habermas vulnerable to the problem of disaffection. People could be disaffected with the rationalist paradigm if the affective qualities it (implicitly) requires are not congruent with their experiences. Or the rationalist paradigm's own affective basis

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<sup>11</sup> Nussbaum's reluctance to embrace the performative or transgressive dimension of affect reflects the old and formidable concern about affect, which she eloquently describes as follows: "[I]f emotions are just unthinking forces that have no connection with our thoughts, evaluations, or plans, then they really are just like the invading currents of some ocean. And they really are, in a sense, nonself." Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 26-27. Legitimate as this concern is, I think confounding the affective and the cognitive is theoretically untenable and seriously constrains our understanding of the matter. The inexplicable experience of nonself might be what we must undergo in order to realize, and transform if needed, our deep-seated normative boundaries.

could be eroded by changes in socioeconomic structures and power relations. What happens, then?

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first section recounts the rationalist paradigm as a prominent strand of contemporary democratic theory. Despite significant differences, both Rawls and Habermas draw out a deontological and cognitivist approach from Kant. But Kant himself was drawn to affect while trying to resolve an impasse within his moral philosophy. Kant ultimately failed to come to terms with affect on its own terms, leaving his impasse unresolved. In developing his insights, Rawls and Habermas bracket Kant's unsuccessful engagement with affect and do so, I claim, at their peril. The rest of the chapter unfolds this claim. The second section analyzes how Rawls and Habermas run the risk of impoverishing rational deliberation by neglecting the crucial role of affect in the construction of norms. I demonstrate that the central mechanism of rational deliberation—Rawls's "original position" and Habermas's "principle of universalization"—rests on empathic imagination, which is impossible without a great deal of affective engagement. The third section discusses how Rawls and Habermas try to address the problem of motivation and, in doing so, reveal the extent to which the rationalist paradigm does rely on certain affective qualities. In spite of this essential reliance, Rawls and Habermas simply presume the existence of those performative affects. The last section discusses the implications of this presumption. Analyzing Habermas's early work on the bourgeois public sphere as an example, I discuss how the rationalist paradigm's universal, reasonable norms are in fact based on affective qualities produced in relation to historically specific social structures and power relations. By failing to interrogate the historical and power-laden formation of affect, the rationalist paradigm exposes its performative affects to the whim of changing power relations. Moreover, the rationalist paradigm's universal rationalism denies a performative role to any other

affects except for its own, thereby suppressing new normative sources of democratic politics. As a result, the rationalist paradigm is unable to address, and possibly, if unintentionally, complicit with, the situation where people are not disposed to engage reasonable norms.

### **The Rationalist Paradigm and Its Dilemma**

Rawls and Habermas come from quite different intellectual backgrounds, but they share a desire to construct a philosophical basis for consensus in a society marked by deep and fundamental disagreements. Rawls states that a modern society is characterized by a “plurality of reasonable yet incompatible comprehensive doctrines” (which he terms the “fact of reasonable pluralism”) and argues that the major task of political philosophy is “to uncover the conditions of the possibility of a reasonable public basis of justification on fundamental political questions.”<sup>12</sup> Likewise, while acknowledging disagreements over the “grammar of forms of life,”<sup>13</sup> Habermas believes that such disagreements can be “resolved convincingly from the perspective of participants on the basis of potential justifications that are equally accessible to all” in a “moral language game.”<sup>14</sup> What moral philosophy should do, Habermas insists, is to “identify the kinds of reasons and interpretations that can lend the moral language game sufficient rational force” (IO 8). Thus Rawls and Habermas are on the same quest for establishing the rules of the game, so to speak, by which various individuals might play democracy, and diverge only when it comes to *where* those rules should

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<sup>12</sup> John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, expanded edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007 [1993]), xvi-xvii, xix. Hereafter cited in the text as PL. See also John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, ed. Erin Kelly (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 2-5. Hereafter cited in the text as JFR.

<sup>13</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 2: *Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987), 576, 579. See also his *Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1: *Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), 339-403.

<sup>14</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 4. Hereafter cited in the text as IO.



apply. Rawls focuses on political, social, and economic institutions, or the “basic structures” of society (PL 11), whereas Habermas is more interested in everyday contexts of communication. Seen in this light, it is not entirely surprising that Habermas calls his disagreement with Rawls a “family quarrel,” saying that he “admire[s] [Rawls’s] project, share[s] its intentions, and regard[s] its essential result as correct.”<sup>15</sup> Indeed, as I will demonstrate, the theories of Rawls and Habermas mirror each other in important respects, and suffer from similar problems.

In developing their projects, both Rawls and Habermas turn to Kant. Their immediate purpose is different. While Rawls aims to challenge utilitarianism as the “predominant systematic theory” in moral philosophy,<sup>16</sup> Habermas attempts to salvage the emancipatory potential of modernity from its radical critics.<sup>17</sup> Also, the way they appropriate Kant is dissimilar. Rawls relies on what he calls “Kantian constructivism”—the idea that the content of justice comes out of a specific procedure of construction upon which all can agree.<sup>18</sup> Rawls’s famous concept of the “original position” by which individuals generate principles of justice is such a constructive procedure.<sup>19</sup> In contrast, Habermas “reconstructs” Kant’s moral philosophy as a “discourse ethics.” Viewing the orientation toward “reaching understanding

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<sup>15</sup> Jürgen Habermas, “Reconciliation through the Public Use of Reason,” in IO 50. This chapter was originally published as part of an exchange with Rawls in *The Journal of Philosophy* 92(3) (1995): 109–131.

<sup>16</sup> John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), vii. Hereafter cited in the text as TJ.

<sup>17</sup> For Habermas’s engagement with these critics, see his *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

<sup>18</sup> John Rawls, “Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 77(9) (1980), 516. Rawls differs from Kant, however, in conceptualizing who constitutes “all.” While Kant presupposes a transcendental autonomous subject, Rawls situates “agents of construction” in a historically specific context, or more specifically, in a “democratic society under modern conditions.” Ibid., 518. This difference is evident in Rawls’s use of “reflective equilibrium” to justify the original position. Rawls insists that “the principles which would be chosen [in the original position] match our considered convictions of justice” (TJ 19).

<sup>19</sup> Rawls did not explicitly use the term “Kantian constructivism” in *A Theory of Justice* where the concept of the original position was first introduced. But as early as in 1980, he remarked that Kantian constructivism could show more clearly the Kantian roots of his theory than he had not examined in *A Theory of Justice*. Ibid., 515.

(*Verständigung*)” and validity claims as central to the communicative practice of everyday life, Habermas replaces the Kantian categorical imperative by a procedure of moral argumentation.<sup>20</sup> Although Rawls and Habermas make a number of significant changes to this initial formulation, they maintain the basic structure of their argument, especially what they take to be Kant’s most important contribution to moral philosophy: a *deontological* and *cognitivist* approach to justice. Rawls and Habermas, despite their differences, prioritize the right over the good (deontological), and rely primarily on reason—supposedly the only cognitive faculty—to draw out and justify the content of the right (cognitivist). Naturally, this methodological commitment leads them to privilege reason as the ultimate source of the right. Hence the “rationalist paradigm.”

Since Rawls and Habermas rely on Kant’s moral philosophy to develop their own theory, an examination of Kant may help to prefigure the problems of the rationalist paradigm to be discussed in the following sections. Kant famously defines freedom as the ability of practical reason to legislate for oneself and obey universal moral laws. It is only through this freedom, he claims, that human beings can initiate a course of history that is not predetermined by nature, or in Kant’s terms, effect “absolute spontaneity” or “causality through freedom.”<sup>21</sup> Reason seeks to bring about the “highest good,” in a person as well as in a world, as its final purpose (CPR 137-142). But the actualization of the highest good poses a difficulty, because the highest good is a twofold concept consisting of two “entirely heterogeneous” elements—virtue/morality (independent of nature) and happiness (relying on nature)—that “very

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<sup>20</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, trans. C. Lehnhart and S. Weber Nicholsen (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 197. Hereafter cited in the text as MCCA. See also Jürgen Habermas, *Justification and Application: Remarks on Discourse Ethics*, trans. Ciaran Cronin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), esp. chaps 1 and 2. Hereafter cited in the text as JA.

<sup>21</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Wener S. Pluhar (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2002), 67-68. Hereafter cited in the text as CPR.

much restrict and impair each other in the same subject in order to make this [highest] good possible” (CPR 144-145). This creates a serious impasse within Kant’s moral philosophy as a whole, insofar as difficulties involved in the attainment of the highest good threaten the validity of the moral law that unconditionally commands us to pursue that good. In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant attempts to resolve this impasse by postulating the immortality of soul and the existence of God (CPR 155-167). These postulates are designed to convince us that, on the one hand, we are making an infinite progress toward the highest good and that, on the other, that the seemingly chaotic and contingent appearance of nature is actually guided toward the highest good by a supreme being. But especially because, as Kant admits, these postulates are not cognizable, the problem is not resolved at all but only transferred to a different register. If we are unable to discern these postulates, how can we develop faith in them?

In the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant offers a different solution to this impasse. This time Kant tries to “throw a bridge” between the realm of nature and the realm of freedom by resorting to aesthetic judgment that allows us to discern and feel pleasure in “the beautiful (*das Schöne*)” exhibiting a certain lawful, moral character of nature—what he calls “purposiveness (*Zweckmäßigkeit*)” of nature.<sup>22</sup> Since it is tied to both pleasure and morality, aesthetic judgment can connect freedom and nature, morality and happiness. As Kant puts it, aesthetic judgment is “neither nature nor freedom, and yet is linked with the basis of freedom, the supersensible, in which the theoretical and the practical power are in an unknown manner combined and joined into a unity” (CJ 229). More specifically, aesthetic judgment does this by enabling us to attain “attunement (*Stimmung*)” of our mind to moral duty, the state in which the mind has

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<sup>22</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Wener S. Pluhar (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1987), 37, 45. Hereafter cited in the text as CJ.

the “inclination (*Neigung*) to expand its moral attitude” (CJ 335). Importantly, Kant portrays attunement as an essentially affective process that precedes cognition.

“[A]ttunement does actually take place whenever a given object, by means of senses, induces the imagination to its activity of combining the manifold, the imagination in turn inducing the understanding to its activity of providing unity for this manifold in concepts ... the only way this attunement can be determined is by feeling.”

“Attunement is the subjective condition of cognition, and without it cognition could not arise” (CJ 88). Kant seems to suggest, if unaware of its full implications, that individuals need to be affectively oriented and attached to specific objects (e.g., morality) before they can begin to think and act (the implications of the concept *Stimmung* will be discussed more fully with reference to Heidegger’s conceptualization in Chapter 5).

Kant’s theory of aesthetic judgment addresses the impasse of his moral philosophy in an insightful way. Still, it is not without difficulties. The major difficulty stems from Kant’s claim that aesthetic judgment “must have a subjective principle, which determines only by feeling rather than by concepts, though nonetheless with universal validity, what is liked or disliked” (CJ 87). But aren’t universality and subjectivity, like virtue and happiness, entirely heterogeneous to each other? How can we fulfill this rather oxymoronic requirement of subjective universality? Kant answers with yet another presupposition that there is a “common sense (*sensus communis*)” that makes the feeling about the beautiful common to everyone (CJ 87). Kant’s impasse is then not resolved and transferred, once again, to the following question: where does a common sense come from? Facing this question, Kant stops theorizing affect on its own terms and collapses the affective to the cognitive. In an account that anticipates Rawls’s account of the original position, Kant argues that we can create a common sense by performing a simple set of cognitive

exercises. “[W]e compare our judgment not so much with the actual as rather with the merely possible judgments of others, and [thus] put ourselves in the position of everyone else, merely by abstracting from the limitations that [may] happen to attach to our own judging; and this in turn we accomplish by leaving out as much as possible whatever is matter, i.e., sensation, in the presentational state, and by paying attention solely to the formal features of our presentation or of our presentational state” (CJ 160). But if, as Kant’s own theory suggests, the cognitive is preceded by the affective, saying that affects can be generated by cognitive exercises does not really solve the problem but only sets in motion an infinite regress: where does a common sense for *those* cognitive exercises come from?

Although Kant’s theoretical solutions are not satisfactory, he makes observations that could help us explore alternative ways of addressing the Kantian impasse. To begin, it is important to understand how, exactly, Kant asserts the universal validity of aesthetic judgment. His dominant disposition—which may be called universalist—is to presume some sort of aesthetic sensibility commonly possessed by humanity. Regardless of individual differences, the universalist voice tells us, everyone can agree on what is beautiful and what is ugly. This is probably why Kant treats the creation of a common sense as a simple matter of cognizing what we, deep in our heart, already feel. But at times Kant’s own formulation of the matter seems to disrupt this universalist conceptualization. Consider, for example, the following remark: “[W]hoever declares something to be beautiful holds that everyone *ought* to give his approval to the object at hand and that he too should declare it beautiful. Hence the *ought* in an aesthetic judgment, even when we have all the data needed for judging, is still uttered conditionally. We solicit everyone else’s assent because we have a basis for it that is common to all” (CJ 86, emphasis in original). Only the very last part of this passage speaks his universalist voice. The rest of it,

however, seems to suggest that aesthetic sensibility is something that is less *cognized* than *invoked*: one “declares” something to be beautiful and “requires” and “solicits” other people’s assent, which appears too laborious and redundant of an effort if there is already a strong common basis for consensus. Also, if aesthetic sensibility is given, it is difficult to understand why the normative claim of aesthetic judgment is always *indeterminate*, that is, why it is “uttered conditionally” even when “we have all the data for judging.” Affectively engaged aesthetic experience, it seems, not only invokes aesthetic sensibility but, in doing so, generates a new set of data, as it were, for us to cognize. Affect seems to claim its presence where Kant tries to deny it, indicating that attunement—a precondition for cognition—cannot be attained without also dismantling and renegotiating the existing cognitive structure, however universal it may seem at a particular point of history.

Affect seems to make just such a claim in Kant’s discussion of the French Revolution. In *The Contest of Faculties* published in 1798, Kant questions whether the human race has been progressing (recall that this is the idea Kant tries to affirm with the postulate of the immortal soul in the *Critique of Practical Reason*), and examines the French Revolution as an event that “might suggest that man has the quality of power of being the *cause* and ... the *author* of his own improvement.”<sup>23</sup> Interestingly, what impresses Kant is not “those momentous deeds or misdeeds of men [revolutionaries]” but the “attitudes of the onlookers” that “prove[] that man has a moral character.” As he says, “[The French] revolution has aroused in the hearts and desires of all spectators who are not themselves caught up in it a *sympathy* which borders almost on enthusiasm, although the very utterance of this sympathy was fraught with danger. It cannot therefore have been caused by anything other than a

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<sup>23</sup> Kant, “Contest of Faculties,” 181, emphasis in original.

moral disposition within the human race.”<sup>24</sup> Again, only the very last sentence reinforces Kant’s universalist view. But if a moral disposition is universal, why is its expression so remarkable? Moreover, how can that expression be “a form of improvement [of the human race] in itself,” even if “no right-thinking man would ever decide to make the same experiment [the French revolution]?”<sup>25</sup>

To understand Kant’s curious endorsement of the French revolution, it is important to note that he uses the concept “enthusiasm” to describe the sympathy aroused by the French revolution. Kant defines enthusiasm as “affect that accompanies the idea of the good” (CJ 132). He claims that enthusiasm is “sublime aesthetically” and that “the sublime (*das Erhabene*) must always have reference to our *way of thinking*, i.e., to maxims directed to providing the intellectual [side in us] and our rational ideas with supremacy over sensibility” (CJ 132, 134-135). This seems like but another manifestation of Kant’s attempt to collapse the affective to the cognitive. But “having reference to” is different from being completely subsumed by cognition. Indeed, Kant distinguishes the sublime from the beautiful precisely because the sublime expands our imagination by *violating* existing cognitive boundaries. As he states, “natural beauty carries with it a purposiveness in its form, by which the object seems as it were predetermined for our power of judgment, so that this beauty constitutes in itself an object of our liking ... [But] if something arouses in us, merely in apprehension and without any reasoning on our part, a feeling of the sublime, then it may indeed appear ... contrapurpose for our power of judgment, incommensurate with our power of exhibition, and as it were violent to our imagination” (CJ 99). Whereas reflective judgment “finds itself purposively attuned in relation to cognition in general” in the case of the beautiful, the liking for the sublime is attached not to specific objects

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 182.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

but to the “*expansion of the imagination itself*” (CJ 99, 105, emphasis added). Seen in this light, Kant’s passionate response to the French revolution may be interpreted differently, pace his own account. According to Kant, ordinary people’s affective response to the revolution merely confirms the fact that a moral character already exists as a universal entity that can be exploited by reason’s cognitive functions. As examined above, this interpretation is unconvincing insofar as it leaves us wondering how a mere confirmation of what humanity already possesses can constitute a “form of improvement” of the human race. This puzzle can be solved, I submit, only when we view our moral character, like aesthetic sensibility, not as a given but as something to be *indeterminately invoked* and *permanently expanded*. Thus viewed, what Kant reports may be one of the significant moments when that indeterminate invocation gets responded and the scope and possibility of reason is expanded.

As we will examine more closely in Chapter 5, my alternative interpretation of Kant finds resonances in Arendt’s reading of Kant’s third *Critique*. For now, my focus is to highlight that the Kantian impasse, as it were, is left unresolved because Kant failed to develop the insight that affective engagement (re)constitutes the purpose of reason and enables people to pursue that purpose even when such a pursuit is “fraught with danger.” As we will see in following section, a similar impasse haunts Rawls’s and Habermas’s search for reasonable norms of democratic politics, as they repeat Kant’s mistake and fail to fully acknowledge the role of affect in the construction and realization of norms. Like Kant, Rawls and Habermas are drawn almost inexorably to the realm of affect in the end, but their reluctance to theorize affect on its own terms perpetuates their predecessor’s dilemma.

## **Affect in Norm Justification**



Rawls and Habermas build their theory of democracy around a procedure by which diverse people could undertake rational deliberation and come to an agreement on important moral and political issues. As noted above, in this procedure the right takes priority over the good, and reason over affect. Is this strict prioritization really necessary to establishing norms of democratic society, as Rawls and Habermas propose? Is it, more fundamentally, sustainable?

Rawls understands the good in terms of interest in its broad sense (“plans of life”), which is something that rational people “want” (TJ 407-408). Thus the good is closely associated with affect he variably calls propensities, inclinations, desires, or aspirations. Rawls cannot exclude affect entirely from his theory, because he needs “assumptions about the parties’ motives in the original position” (TJ 396). But for Rawls affect is something to be regulated and contained by the right. As he puts it, “the principles of right ... impose restrictions on what are reasonable conceptions of one’s good ... [people’s] desires and aspirations are restricted from the outset” (TJ 31).

This theoretical disposition is manifested most clearly in the conceptual center of Rawls’s theory—the “original position.” The original position refers to the initial situation where people choose the basic principles of justice. Rawls characterizes this initial choice environment by two distinctive features. First, people make their choices behind a “veil of ignorance”: “no one knows his place in society, his class position or social status, nor does any one know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence, strength, and the like ... [T]he parties do not [even] know their conceptions of the good or their special psychological propensities” (TJ 12, 137). Second, the parties to the original position are “rational.” As Rawls states, those in the original positions are “rational and mutually disinterested.” This does not mean that they are egoists, but they are “concerned to advance their interests” (TJ 118) and “take no interest in one another’s interests” (TJ 127). Here the concept of “rationality”

is interpreted narrowly as that standard in economic theory, that is, as instrumental rationality that “tak[es] the most effective means to given ends” (TJ 14). Together, these assumptions are intended to purge the original position of sentiments such as impartiality, sympathy, or benevolence, because these affective states are “so complex that no definite theory at all can be worked out” (TJ 148). To attain “a kind of moral geometry with all the rigor” (TJ 121), Rawls argues, we must “assume as little as possible” and “not presuppose ... extensive ties of natural sentiments” (TJ 129).

However, Rawls’s explicitly rationalist formulation of the original position seems to be disrupted by its own requirement. The major problem arises from a tension between the two features of the original position. Recall that Rawls’s individuals are “rational” in the sense that they desire the good (plans of life) and figure out the most effective way to realize it. Rawls treats the affective attachment to the good simply as a matter of motivation. But what he fails to notice is how affect helps constitute a *perspectival universe* that must preexist for the reasoning to take place. Reasoning presupposes a stable universe that provides the boundaries as well as the objects of our perception. To reason, people must create the perspectival universe by affectively engaging with the particular good; otherwise, they cannot even begin to reason, because there is nothing to reason *about*. Now the veil of ignorance deprives the “rational agents” of all the information, making it impossible to make out even a minimal shape of their life plans. How can one fathom one’s plan of life with virtually no knowledge about herself? To the extent that this is not a feasible task, and that we presuppose life plans as the only good for rational individuals as Rawls does, the veil of ignorance effectively prevents the formation of the perspectival universe and thus the working of reason. It is, then, hard to see how those in the original position can choose *anything*, let alone principles of justice.

This impasse takes Rawls's rationalist theory in an unexpected direction. For example, consider Rawls's following remark: "[T]he combination of mutual disinterest and the veil of ignorance achieves the same purpose as benevolence. For this combination of conditions forces each person in the original position to take the good of others into account" (TJ 148; see also 187). Here, Rawls does not deny the status of benevolence, sympathy, or compassion as a possible source of justice. He simply sees no reason to rely on those affective qualities, because he is confident that his rationalist model can achieve the same effect. But if, as I have shown, the combination of rationality and the veil of ignorance fails to achieve the intended effect and instead results in an impasse, Rawls might have to rely on affect to establish principles of justice (or as he calls it, "justice as fairness").

In fact, Rawls's modification of the rationality requirement in his later works suggests that he might indeed be drawn to affect, if reluctantly. Admitting that his attempt to derive the content of justice from instrumental rationality is a "very misleading" error,<sup>26</sup> Rawls comes up with a notion of "the reasonable" which is defined as the "read[iness] to propose principles and standards as fair terms of cooperation and to abide by them willingly, given the assurance that others will likewise do so" (JFR 6-7; PL 49). He writes that the reasonable and the rational "work in tandem" as independent and complementary ideas (PL 52), but "the reasonable has priority over the rational and subordinates it absolutely" (JFR 81-82). So those in the original position are now both reasonable and rational, and while they still desire their life plans, they care even more about social cooperation. The key aspect of this revision is that social cooperation is presented as the good to which people already have affective attachments. At one point, Rawls himself invokes the language of affect

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<sup>26</sup> John Rawls, "Justice as Fairness: Political, not Metaphysical," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 14(3) (1985), 237n20. Rawls already comes up with a distinction between the reasonable and the rational in his 1980 lecture. See "Kantian Constructivism," 530.

to distinguish the reasonable from the rational. “What rational agents lack is the particular form of *moral sensibility* that underlies the *desire* to engage in fair cooperation as such” (PL 51, emphasis added). Ultimately, however, Rawls stops short of explicitly theorizing the affective dimension of the reasonable. He argues that the reasonable parallels Kant’s concept of the categorical imperative (JFR 81), and detaches the reasonable from impartiality that he associates with sympathy and altruism (PL 50).

But Rawls’s revision makes it difficult to avoid the complex realm of affect. On his revised account, people deliberate primarily to propose fair terms of cooperation rather than to realize their individual life plans. While rational individuals need to think only about their own good, reasonable people have to consider the good of others as well to understand what others would deem fair. Seen in this light, the veil of ignorance takes on a different meaning. It is no longer a simple device constraining the information of *one person*, but a demand for people to reflect upon what might be fair or unfair from the perspective of *everyone* who variably lacks socioeconomic attributes such as religious freedom, privileged economic position, respectable social status, education, and so forth. This demand, then, can hardly be met by reasoning alone, as Rawls seems to believe. Rather, reasonable people must be able to *empathize* with what it feels like not to have all those characteristics. In other words, they need to imagine a concrete person who is disadvantaged with regard to, say, social status, reflect on fairness from that person’s viewpoint, and then do the same with all imaginable persons. As Susan Moller Okin puts it, the original position requires reasonable people to “think from the position of *everybody*, in the sense of *each in turn*.” What all this amounts to is a great deal of empathic imagination that requires serious affective engagement. “The original position requires that, as moral subjects,

we consider the identities, aims, and attachments of every other person, however different they may be from ourselves, as of equal concern with our own.”<sup>27</sup>

Although Habermas is quite critical of parts of Rawls’s theory, a set of common assumptions underlie Habermas’s own rationalist theory of democracy. Like Rawls, Habermas constructs a strict distinction between the good and the right, or as he sometimes calls it, between the ethical point of view associated with personal value-orientations and the moral point of view concerning universal obligations (IO 26). In fact, Habermas is even more rigid about this distinction than Rawls. Claiming that Rawls is mistaken to draw on people’s sense of and desire for the good in establishing the right, Habermas proposes a complete “uncoupling” of the right and the good, and insists on the absolute priority of the right over the good as the precondition for impartiality (IO 28). He recommends that the procedure of norm justification be constructed “in a more strictly procedural manner” (IO 57). For Habermas (as for Rawls), affect is bound to “contingent determinations” such as “preexisting interests and context-dependent value-orientations,” and need to be “assimilate[d] ... to practical reason itself” to establish the categorical validity of moral obligations (IO 32).

Habermas aims to construct a pure procedural model of norm justification, not just because it is more consistent with Kantian ethics but because he thinks that Rawls’s theory has undemocratic implications. Habermas criticizes Rawls for trying to achieve impartiality by his expert design, not by the actual contributions of participants in moral argumentation (MCCA 66). Rawls, Habermas charges, “imposes a common perspective on the parties in the original position through informational constraints and thereby neutralizes the multiplicity of particular interpretive

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<sup>27</sup> Susan Moller Okin, “Reason and Feeling in Thinking about Justice,” *Ethics* 99(2) (1989), 244, 246, emphasis in original.

perspectives from the outset” (IO 57). According to Habermas, fundamental issues of democratic society “cannot be handled monologically but require a cooperative effort” (MCCA 67). Based on this belief, Habermas attempts to show how people’s “multiple interpretive perspectives” could converge without substantive constraints such as the veil of ignorance. But Habermas’s discourse ethics does regulate moral argumentation with its own two cardinal principles. The first is the principle of discourse ethics: “Only those norms can claim to be valid that could meet with the acceptance of all concerned in their capacity as participants in a practical discourse” (IO 41). This principle clearly places a strong emphasis on reason and its cognitive function, because one’s beliefs and proposals must be presented and understood in rational terms to pass a validity test. As Habermas writes, the principle of discourse ethics “already *presupposes* that we *can* justify our choice of a norm” (MCCA 66, emphasis in original).

However, this rationalist overtone is complicated when we examine more carefully what constitutes the “acceptance of all concerned.” This point is specified by the second principle of discourse ethics—the principle of universalization: “A norm is valid when the foreseeable consequences and side effects of its general observance for the interests and value-orientations of *each individual* could be jointly accepted by *all* concerned without coercion” (IO 42, emphasis in original). This formulation quite explicitly states that an opinion must appeal to people’s idea of the good, and by implication affect associated with the good, to elicit people’s acceptance. The universalization principle, then, seems to call for something quite similar to what I have identified as an implicit requirement of Rawls’s original position: to be able to propose an acceptable opinion, participants in the norm justification process must empathize with everyone else’s position. Habermas himself seems to acknowledge this: “[T]he reflexive application of the universalization test calls for a form of deliberation

in which each participant is compelled to adopt the perspective of all others in order to examine whether a norm could be willed by all *from the perspective of each person*” (IO 33, emphasis in original). But like Rawls, Habermas does not acknowledge affect as an independent source of normativity. To be included in the process of norm justification, affect must be translated (i.e., transformed) into epistemic terms accessible to reason. “Pragmatic and ethical reasons ... also play a role in these deliberations ... but these agent-relative reasons no longer *count* as rational motives and value-orientations of individual persons but as epistemic contributions to a discourse in which norms are examined with the aim of reaching a communicative agreement” (IO 31, emphasis in original).

We have seen how the exclusion of affect in Rawls’s and Habermas’s theory causes trouble for the functioning of rational deliberation. This discussion casts serious doubts on the view that democracy could produce binding norms without engaging affect; affect is involved too deeply in the working of reason to be ignored. Without the support of affect, reason cannot establish the goals to pursue, assign values and priorities to different yet equally reasonable alternatives, or reflect from other people’s point of view. But even when affect demands its presence at the heart of their theory, Rawls and Habermas are reluctant to include it in the process of norm justification. There is something curious about their almost nervous reluctance, because at times Rawls and Habermas use the concept of reason quite capaciously as if it already includes some affective qualities. In fact, a closer examination reveals that affect is not refused wholesale but *presumed* in the theory of Rawls and Habermas. Let us take up this issue in the following section.

### **Affect and the Problem of Motivation**

While Rawls and Habermas insist that norm justification be “affectless,” they realize that reason alone cannot explain *why* people would participate in rational deliberation. In other words, they realize that the rationalist paradigm might suffer from a motivational deficit. How can we solicit people’s allegiance and commitment to the process of rational deliberation, especially when “the people” is a constantly changing entity? As I will show, Rawls and Habermas fail to provide a theoretically convincing response to this question, but importantly, their unsuccessful endeavor reveals the extent to which their theory is built on a set of untested assumptions.

Rawls brings up the issue of motivation to deal with the question of stability. He believes that even if the principles of justice are chosen in the original position, whether those principles can endure over time is a separate issue that needs justification. “One conception of justice is more stable than another ... if the sense of justice that it tends to generate is stronger and more likely to override disruptive inclinations ... However attractive a conception of justice might be on other grounds, it is seriously defective if the principles of moral psychology are such that it fails to engender in human beings the requisite *desire* to act upon it” (TJ 454-455, emphasis added). To show that his conception of justice “generates its own support” and that “it is likely to have greater stability than the traditional alternatives” (TJ 456), Rawls sketches various stages of moral development through which a person would acquire what he calls a “sense of justice” (and later a “conception-dependent desire,” PL 83-84)—“a *desire* to apply and to act upon the principles of justice” (TJ 474, emphasis added). Rawls’s account of moral psychology is itself highly controversial,<sup>28</sup> but what

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<sup>28</sup> Although Rawls argues that his moral psychology does not have to be supported by psychology, he draws on the psychological theory of Lawrence Kohlberg (who is inspired by Jean Piaget) that identifies the inclination toward universal moral principles as the highest stage of moral development (TJ 461n8). But Kohlberg’s admittedly Kantian theory has been challenged by many feminist scholars, most notably by Carol Gilligan who forcefully argues that Kohlberg’s theory marginalizes feminine virtues such as care and sympathy. Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Psychology of Moral Development: Moral Stages and the Idea of Justice* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981); Carol Gilligan, *In a Different*



is more relevant to my discussion is the way in which Rawls works affect into his theory.

It is to be stressed that Rawls's discussion of affect is introduced only to show how the principles of justice might *reproduce* themselves once they are chosen in the original position.<sup>29</sup> Rawls's flirtation with moral psychology is a way of speculating a socialization process that makes this reproduction possible by incorporating the principles of justice into one's system of desire. Any reproductive mechanism requires an object of reproduction, and Rawls's hypothetical socialization, too, presupposes a "well-ordered society" that is *already* guided by the principles of justice. In other words, Rawls posits that the establishment of the principles of justice *precedes* the sense of justice. Puzzlingly, however, Rawls also asserts that his theory of justice is a "theory of our moral sentiments" (TJ 51, 120) and "describe[s] our sense of justice" (TJ 48) when he discusses the establishment of the principles of justice, indicating that people's sense of justice *already* exists. Rawls's argument, then, is circular: people need the principles of justice to cultivate a sense of justice, but the principles of justice cannot be established without an already existing sense of justice.

Of course, for Rawls this is not a puzzle because there *is* this "already existing sense of justice" (this may be considered the performative affect that is involved in the initial establishment of the rationalist paradigm's norms). But notably, this performative affect is afforded from *outside* his theory. For example, consider Rawls's remark in *A Theory of Justice*: "Let us *assume* that each person beyond a certain age and possessed by the requisite intellectual capacity develops a sense of justice under

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*Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982). As I will discuss presently, Habermas too relies on Kohlberg's theory of moral development.

<sup>29</sup> Recent studies discover sentimentalist elements in Rawls's theory. But they often fail to recognize the fact that Rawls pays attention only to the reproductive affect. I discuss the problems of the rationalist paradigm's selective approach to affect in the last section. See Okin, "Reason and Feeling"; Michael Frazer, "John Rawls: Between Two Enlightenments," *Political Theory* 35(6) (2007), 756-780; Susan Mendus, "The Importance of Love in Rawls's Theory of Justice," *British Journal of Political Science* 29(1) (1999): 57-75.

normal social circumstances” (TJ 46, emphasis added). What are these “normal social circumstances?” How do those circumstances lead to the development of the sense of justice? Rawls remains silent; as he says, he *assumes*.

Rawls himself finds this assumption dissatisfactory. In fact, he says that all the important revisions he makes in *Political Liberalism* stem from his attempt to address this problem (PL xv-xvi). Rawls finds his treatment of stability in *A Theory of Justice* “unrealistic,” because given the “fact of reasonable pluralism” one cannot expect people to endorse the principles of justice presented as a “comprehensive” doctrine rooted in truth claims (PL xv-xvii). Rawls now understands justice as fairness as a “political conception of justice,” which is “freestanding” from all the comprehensive doctrines (PL 12). Thus revised, justice as fairness requires an additional basis for stability. Because citizens are likely to have different comprehensive doctrines even when they are successfully socialized in a well-ordered society to embody a sense of justice, it is necessary to show that the principles of justice can be the focus of an “overlapping consensus” of those doctrines (PL 141). Rawls argues this overlapping consensus is possible because, despite all the other irreconcilable differences, those living in a democratic society retain some common sense of justice, which, again, he *assumes* to exist in what he calls “public political culture.”

“Since we seek an agreed basis of public justification in matters of justice, and since no political agreement on those disputed questions can reasonably be expected, we turn instead to the *fundamental ideas we seem to share through the public political culture*. From these ideas we try to work out a political conception of justice congruent with our considered convictions on due reflection. Once this is done, citizens may within their comprehensive doctrines regard the political conception of justice as true, or as reasonable, whatever their view allows” (PL 150-151, emphasis added; see also 97, 100-101).

At this point, Rawls's theory seems to take a decisive historical turn. The principles of justice, Rawls now says, are produced not by abstract rational agents who freely use the original position as a device of representation but by actual people who are deeply embedded in the public political culture comprising "the political institutions of a constitutional regime and the public traditions of their interpretation (including those of the judiciary), as well as historic texts and documents that are common knowledge" (PL 13-14). Of course, Rawls does not argue that the public political culture is completely homogenous or common to all members of a society. "It is inevitable and often desirable that citizens have different views as to the most appropriate political conception; for the public political culture is bound to contain different fundamental ideas that can be developed in different ways. An orderly contest between them over time is a reliable way to find which one, if any, is most reasonable" (PL 227). But despite Rawls's claim that the public political culture is open to democratic contestation, the actual scope of that openness is dubious. Consider that Rawls makes a point of an "orderly contest," by which he means that the contest between different fundamental ideas within the public political culture must be regulated by what he calls "public reason." "The ideal of public reason is that citizens are to conduct their fundamental discussions within the framework of what each regards as a political conception of justice" (PL 226). But the political conception of justice, as Rawls explains in the passage cited above, is drawn from the *existing* public political culture. Upon this formulation, then, the rules of contestation seriously disadvantage, if not foreclose, a future public political culture in favor of a present one.

Revisiting this issue a few years later, Rawls assures that political liberalism "does not try to fix public reason once and for all in the form of one favored political conception of justice." He argues it is "important" that "new variations" of public reason are "proposed from time to time and older ones may cease to be represented,"

because “otherwise the claims of groups or interests arising from social change might be repressed and fail to gain their appropriate political voice.”<sup>30</sup> But even this more democratic move comes with the “proviso.” “[R]easonable comprehensive doctrines, religious and nonreligious, may be introduced in public political discussion at any time, provided that in due course proper political reasons ... are presented.” Rawls realizes that his account of the proviso invites vexing questions (e.g., what does “in due course” mean?), but he says that those questions must be “worked out in practice.” And “[h]ow they work out,” Rawls remarks, “is determined by the nature of the public political culture.”<sup>31</sup> Thus Rawls’ “proviso,” while intending to make the concept of public reason more inclusive, does little in the way of changing the *structure* of that inclusion. To be included, comprehensive doctrines must conform to the rules premised on the existing public political culture. When the rules themselves are not up for contestation, the fact that the participants could take some time to figure out how to conform to those rules is hardly a consolation. Insofar as he uncritically accepts people’s affective attachment to certain ideas (and aversion to others) as it is, Rawls, despite his historical turn, still fails to ask more fundamental questions: how do people *come to* develop their affective relationship with the ideas constituting the existing public political culture? How is the selection of those ideas influenced by historically specific institutions, norms, and practices? Is that influence normatively justifiable or not?

Although Habermas wants to keep his theory procedural and let the participants in the ideal speech situation decide the substance of norms, he also views the justification and application of norms as separate matters (as Rawls makes a distinction between the production and the reproduction of norms), and considers affect only with regard to the latter. But the problem of a motivational deficit is felt

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<sup>30</sup> John Rawls, “The Idea of Public Reason Revisited,” in PL 451-452.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 462.

even more acutely in Habermas's theory, because he attempts to divorce the right entirely from the good in the process of norm justification. Habermas himself is aware of this difficulty. "[U]ncoupling morality from the questions of the good life leads to a motivational deficit. Because there is no profane substitute for the hope of personal salvation, we lose the strongest motive for obeying moral commands. Discourse ethics intensifies the intellectualistic separation of moral judgment from action even further by locating the moral point of view in rational discourse. There is no direct route from discursively achieved consensus to action" (IO 35; see also JA 75-76, 119-120). While good reasons—what our moral judgments tell us to do—can certainly stimulate our will to a certain extent (IO 35), Habermas finds it too weak as a motivating force. So he proposes an alternative, and it is remarkably similar to Rawls's initial idea. "The ... gap between moral judgments and moral actions needs to be compensated for by a system of internal behavior controls that is triggered by principled moral judgments (convictions that form the basis for motivations) ... [This is made possible] only by the complete internalization of a few highly abstract and universal principles that, as discourse ethics shows, follow logically from the procedure of norm justification" (MCCA 183).<sup>32</sup>

Eventually, Habermas finds this "psychological" response to the motivational problem unsatisfying, and undertakes a rather dramatic modification. In his later major work, *Between Facts and Norms*, Habermas argues that discourse ethics alone can no longer serve as the basis of social integration in "modern societies" characterized by pluralization, individualization, and social differentiation, because the "functionally necessary spheres of strategic interaction" increasingly overwhelm the "integrating

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<sup>32</sup> See also Jürgen Habermas, "Individuation through Socialization: On George Herbert Mead's Theory of Subjectivity," in *Postmetaphysical Thinking*, trans. William Mark Hohengarten (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992 [1988]), 149-204.

capacity of communicative action.”<sup>33</sup> This realization leads Habermas to turn to positive law for additional support.<sup>34</sup> “A morality that depends on the accommodating substrate of propitious personality structures would have a limited effectiveness if it could not engage the actor’s motives in *another* way besides internalization, that is, precisely by way of an institutionalized legal system that *supplements* postconventional morality in a manner effective for action” (BFN 114, emphasis in original). The law is defined not simply by its coercive power but by normative validity as well, and must receive the endorsement of people who engage in communicative action.<sup>35</sup>

However, there is a difficulty with this revised account of motivation, because Habermas now finds the normative authority of communicative action not in actual moral argumentation but in the impersonal, anonymous, “subjectless” flow of communication, the realization of which *presupposes* legal institutions. As he writes, “the success of deliberative politics depends not on a collectively acting citizenry but on the *institutionalization* of the corresponding procedures and conditions of communication, as well as on the interplay of institutionalized deliberative processes with informally developed public opinion” (BFN 298, emphasis added). Habermas, then, faces a similar dilemma that troubles Rawls: we need the legal institutions’ motivating force to produce just norms, but legal institutions cannot fulfill that

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<sup>33</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 25-26. Hereafter cited in the text as BFN.

<sup>34</sup> Habermas looks for an *additional* support, so he does not abandon the “psychological approach.” In his later works, Habermas develops the notion of “constitutional patriotism” that constitutes the background of the legal system as a supportive spirit. For Habermas’s account, see his “Citizenship and National Identity,” in BFN 491-515 and “The Struggles for Recognition in the Democratic State,” in IO 203-236. For discussion, see Attracta Ingram, “Constitutional Patriotism,” *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 22(6) (1999): 1-18; Patchen Markell, “Making Affect Safe for Democracy? On ‘Constitutional Patriotism,’” *Political Theory* 28(1) (2000): 38-63.

<sup>35</sup> Habermas terms this endorsement process “discursive rationalization,” placing it between the liberal notion of “legitimation” and the republican notion of the “constitution of power” (BFN 300). For Habermas’s discussion of the interdependence of law and democracy, see also “On the Internal Relation between the Rule of Law and Democracy,” in IO 253-264.

function unless those norms are *already* produced by us.<sup>36</sup> Within his theoretical framework, Habermas, like Rawls, is unable to account for the performative affect that helps *initiate* this hopefully virtuous circle of law and democracy.

In response to this potential “infinite regress,” Habermas argues that constitutional democracy is a “tradition-building project with a clearly marked beginning in time”:

“All the later generations have the task of actualizing the still-untapped normative substance of the system of rights laid down in the original document of the constitution ... The descendants can learn from past mistakes only if they are “in the same boat” as their forebears. They must impute to all the previous generations the same intention of creating and expanding the bases for a voluntary association of citizens who make their own laws. All participants must be able to recognize the project as *the same* throughout history and to judge it from *the same* perspective ... The unifying bond thus consists of the *shared* practice to which we have recourse.”<sup>37</sup>

So for Habermas, too, the rationalist paradigm’s performative affect is located outside his theory and in the presumed and uncritically accepted historical claim—the “unifying bond” of past and present generations directed toward the original document of the constitution. While revealing how fundamentally the rationalist paradigm relies on the affectively engaged practice tied to historical particularities, Habermas fails to interrogate the politically charged formation and maintenance of this originary practice.

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<sup>36</sup> Frank Michelman points out this problem. “[If] a validity-conferring procedure of democratic examination of laws must be one “that is itself legally constituted” ... and if it takes a legally constituted democratic procedure to bring forth valid fundamental laws, then the (valid) laws that frame *this* lawmaking event must themselves be the product of a conceptually prior procedural event that was itself framed by (valid) laws that must, as such, have issued in their turn from a still prior (properly) legally constituted event. And so on, it would appear, without end.” Frank Michelman, “How Can the People Ever Make the Laws? A Critique of Deliberative Democracy,” in *Deliberative Democracy: Essays on Reason and Politics*, eds. James Bohman and William Rehg (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), 164, emphasis in original.

<sup>37</sup> Jürgen Habermas, “Constitutional Democracy: A Paradoxical Union of Contradictory Principles?” *Political Theory* 29(6) (2001), 774-775, emphasis in original.

In addressing the problem of motivation, both Rawls and Habermas pay some attention to affect. They try, and fail, to confine affect within the reproductive mechanism of norms already established by reason. In doing so, however, they reveal that affect is involved not just in the reproduction but also in the initial production of norms—the process that Rawls and Habermas are at pains to keep reasonable. They acknowledge, in short, that affect is not only reproductive but *performative*. Also acknowledged is the fact that affect is historically and contextually situated. But ultimately, Rawls and Habermas fail to bring this acknowledgement into a full theoretical articulation as they presume, rather than theorize, the existence of the rationalist paradigm's performative affect. This theoretical shortcoming generates serious political problems, to which we now turn.

### **Acquiescent Democracy?**

As discussed in the previous section, the rationalist paradigm does not simply ignore affect but assumes the existence of certain affective qualities. By bracketing the question of power relations involved in the formation and maintenance of those performative affects, the rationalist paradigm obscures, if not conceals, the possibility that the fostering of *its* performative affects might come at the cost of marginalizing *other* performative affects. And the rationalist paradigm is complicit with that marginalization at its own peril because, recall, its performative affects must be afforded from the outside, the dynamics of which it can neither control nor predict fully. Suppose that the institutional, socioeconomic, and cultural conditions are changed so as to undermine the performative affects on which the rationalist paradigm has been depending. The rationalist paradigm, then, might have to look for other performative affects that could establish and sustain another form of rational deliberation. But hasn't the rationalist paradigm been repressing the development of



precisely those other performative affects? The meaning of this irony will become clearer, I hope, when we examine the transformation of democracy in the postwar period in the following chapters. For now, let us anticipate that discussion by looking at one case that sheds light on the formation of the rationalist paradigm's performative affects: Habermas's account of the bourgeois public in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*.<sup>38</sup>

In this early work originally published in 1962, Habermas traces how the meaning of publicness was transformed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from a system of displaying state power to the coming together of "private persons" to discuss "common concerns." Once the public was thus claimed by private individuals or "civil society," it began to function as an opponent and a critic of the political authority (STPS 23). This transformative process is significant for Habermas because of the way in which this new public confronted political authority. As he states, "The medium of this political confrontation was peculiar and without historical precedent: people's public use of their reason" (STPS 27). Incomplete as it was, the bourgeois public provided its participants with a parity based solely on the "authority of the better argument," challenged the conventional knowledge given by church or state authorities, and was in principle inclusive (STPS 36-37). It is here that Habermas first discovers the inchoate form of rational deliberation that is later abstracted into his discourse ethics. Thus, going back to Habermas's historical treatment of rational deliberation would allow us to bring to light some of the assumptions only implicit in his more abstract theorization of discourse ethics.

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<sup>38</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: A Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991). Hereafter cited in the text as STPS. The "public sphere" is a somewhat misleading translation, because it conveys a spatializing image that the German *Öffentlichkeit* does not have. Here I use the term "publicness," or simply "the public."

In contrast to the transhistorical tendency manifested in his later works, Habermas is keenly aware in *Structural Transformation* that the bourgeois public could realize the ideal of rational deliberation (partially and incompletely) only in a particular “historical constellation” (STPS xviii). For example, the development of commercial capitalism was crucial, as it not only shifted the focus of the economy from the state (as well as from the household) to “private persons,” but also necessitated various communication systems, which accelerated the formation of private persons as “the public” (STPS 14-26). Habermas also emphasizes the institutional setting for critical discourse such as coffeehouses, reading societies, and concert halls, the development of the family as the incubator of private autonomy, and the rise of art, music, and literature that informed people’s judgment. But in the end, Habermas is not telling a happy story. In the second half of *Structural Transformation*, he analyzes how the bourgeois public disintegrated as capitalism transitioned from the competitive to the organized phase, the interventionist state grew in its power and came to control social interactions, and the public was increasingly captured and even manufactured by consumerism and the mass media. It is probably due to his realization of this historical demise of the bourgeois public that Habermas later focuses on refining the normative ideal of rational deliberation without much historical footing. But as we have seen, a completely idealized rationalist model is not sustainable because a production of norms must rely on *some* performative affect, the formation of which is historically situated. The attempt to remove affectivity and historicity from rational deliberation undermines the emancipatory potential of reason at its roots.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> In this respect, I think Habermas simplifies the stakes of his predecessors’ project. In my view, Horkheimer and Adorno are concerned less about reason’s immanent illness than about the deterioration of its working environment—the affective, experiential, and sensory dimension of human life. Habermas’s misplaced criticism seems to stem from his hostility toward the attempts to conceptualize imagination as part of human faculty (e.g., aesthetics). However, Habermas’s dichotomy

Habermas's account in *Structural Transformation* helps us uncover the historicity of rational deliberation, because there the participants—the bourgeois public of the seventeenth and eighteenth century—consisted of a *specific* group of people embedded in *particular* institutions, norms, and practices. In this context, the formation of the rationalist paradigm's performative affect (i.e., affective attachment to rational deliberation) was intertwined with the construction of a new political subjectivity. We might characterize this subjectivity as “liberal” for its double skepticism toward the absolutist state as well as the masses. Liberal subjectivity was born in a time of great uncertainty. The emerging ideal of popular sovereignty was transforming a hierarchic society into a horizontal field of numerous and heterogeneous individuals, namely, “the people.” But at the same time, the people was often identified with “the masses” due to its unlimited, unspecified, amorphous nature, and was feared and despised for its unpredictability, vulgarity, and violence. It is at this juncture that liberal subjects emerged to assume, and assign a new meaning to, the elusive category of the people.

Habermas is aware that the eighteenth century manifestation of rational deliberation was tied to the interest of a specific class. But according to him, the ideal of rational deliberation is “more than mere ideology” because of its intrinsic openness and its basic tendency to dissolve domination by reason (STPS 88).<sup>40</sup> In other words, for Habermas the problem lies in the *content*, not the *form*, of rational deliberation.

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of the rational and the aesthetic is not just a mischaracterization of Adorno but a break from the German Enlightenment tradition in general. As Robert Hullot-Kentor points out, “The division between reason and the aesthetic, which Habermas seeks to establish in Adorno's work, is a division drawn and insisted upon by Habermas, not by Adorno. Paradoxically, by insisting on this division Habermas separates himself from the Enlightenment tradition. For throughout the German Enlightenment, and especially since Kant, the defense of reason has been conceived not just as inseparable from but ultimately as dependent on the aesthetic.” Robert Hullot-Kentor, *Things Beyond Resemblance: Collected Essays on Theodor W. Adorno* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 32.

<sup>40</sup> Habermas repeated the same line of argument in his retrospective reflection on this issue, while admitting that in *Structural Transformation* he underestimated the exclusionary nature of the public sphere. Jürgen Habermas, “Further Reflections on the Public Sphere,” in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 425-430.

True, Habermas would readily agree, we need to take into account the interests of women and the plebian class, but only by extending the scope of rational deliberation. This view, however, fails to address the problem in its entirety, as it ignores how rational deliberation *mobilized* the bourgeois public by articulating its performative affect, and by the same token, *demobilized* other forms of publicness by marginalizing their performative affects.

To illustrate this matter, let us put more pressure on some of the points that Habermas notes only in passing. For example, Habermas mentions that the “autonomy of private people” was “founded on the right to property ... [and] realized in the participation in a market economy” (STPS 46). That the bourgeoisie had vested interest in the market gives clue to their eagerness to establish “rational deliberation” as the defining feature of publicness. Considering that at that time the biggest threat to the profiting in the market was perceived to be the “capricious ambition of kings and ministers,” to borrow Adam Smith’s phrase,<sup>41</sup> we might view rational deliberation as a means to ensure constancy and predictability of political rule. Seen in this light, it is too quick to conclude, as Habermas does, that rational deliberation has the potential to dissolve all forms of domination (STPS 88). For if the bourgeois public wanted to subject domination to the standards of “reason” and “law” (STPS 28), they had a very specific kind of domination in mind: the arbitrary intervention in the market mechanism.

But the very same desire for stability and order spawned a fear of the working class. The bourgeoisie was threatened by the sensual and desperate quality of workers’ political action stemming from their lived experience of violence and exploitation. This feeling seems to be captured in the following remark made in the aftermath of June 1848: “Isolated from the nation, placed outside the social and political

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<sup>41</sup> Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (New York: Modern Library, 2000), 460.

community, alone with their concerns and their misery, [the workers] are acting in order to leave that terrible solitude, and, just like the barbarians with whom they are often compared, they perhaps contemplate an invasion.”<sup>42</sup> In this context, elevating rational deliberation as the only form of publicness had the effect of banishing strikes, factory occupation, or mass protest from the realm of legitimate political action.<sup>43</sup>

Moreover, Habermas intimates that the critical and reciprocal dimension of the bourgeois public depended on the “private” source. “The public’s understanding of the public use of reason was guided specifically by such private experiences as grew out of the audience-oriented (*publikumsbezogen*) subjectivity of the conjugal family’s intimate domain (*Intimsphäre*)” (STPS 28). Here the public-private relation Habermas glances over points to the event *constitutive* of the bourgeois public: the construction of the private-feminine sphere. In fact, the idea that rational deliberation occurring in public is to be guided by sentiments cultivated in the family seems to come almost directly from the text of Rousseau who, of course, most notoriously melds women and the private sphere together.<sup>44</sup> With his full rhetorical force, Rousseau was indeed engaged in a construction, because as Joan Landes observes, women under the *Ancien Régime* did have a limited yet significant public presence. According to Landes, it was only during the course of the French Revolution that the private-feminine sphere got

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<sup>42</sup> The remark comes from Eugène Sue’s *Les Mystères de Paris* (1851). Quoted in Stefan Jonsson, “The Invention of the Masses: The Crowd in French Culture from the Revolution to the Commune,” in *Crowds*, eds. Jeffrey T. Schnapp and Matthew Tiewes (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 65.

<sup>43</sup> For classic accounts of these alternative forms of political action, see E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Pantheon, 1964 [1963]); Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down* (London: Temple Smith, 1972). See also Charles Tilly, *Popular Contestation in Great Britain* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

<sup>44</sup> For a discussion of this aspect of Rousseau’s philosophy, see Nicole Ferman, *Domesticating Passions: Rousseau, Woman, and Nation* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1997); Penny A. Weiss, *Gendered Community: Rousseau, Sex, and Politics* (New York: New York University Press, 1993); and Linda M. G. Zerilli, *Signifying Woman: Culture and Chaos in Rousseau, Burke, and Mill* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994).

stabilized and institutionalized.<sup>45</sup> And the practice of rational deliberation played a crucial role in this process. Just as the elevation of calm and rational deliberation marginalized more physical and direct modes of political action, the emphasis on clarity and universality served to delegitimize elite women's allegorical, stylistic, and particularistic modes of articulation as public discourse. Again, it was the form, not just the content, of rational deliberation that displaced other modes of publicness. "[T]he secret power of bourgeois formalist and universalist rhetoric may be seen to derive from the way it promised to empty out the feminine connotations (and ultimately, the women as well) of absolutist public life."<sup>46</sup>

What all this suggests is that rational deliberation as manifested in the eighteenth century bourgeois public was essentially an affectively engaged articulation of the particularities associated with the white male bourgeoisie.<sup>47</sup> Of course, this does not exhaust the normative potential of the ideal of rational deliberation. But it does call our attention to affectivity and particularity inexorably involved in *any* realization of an ideal. Without affective engagement, valid norms can neither be established nor realized. For rational deliberation to be possible, people must care about common issues, want to form an opinion directed toward a specific audience, and be disposed to perform some degree of empathic imagination. And if, as Habermas's account of the bourgeois public exemplifies, affects are fostered or hindered by particular institutions, norms, and practices, we cannot simply presume, as the rationalist paradigm does, the existence of those affective prerequisites. Such a presumption would amount to the uncritical acceptance of power relations working to

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<sup>45</sup> Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988). See also Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

<sup>46</sup> Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere*, 40.

<sup>47</sup> For an excellent discussion of this point, see essays by Nancy Fraser, Mary Ryan, Geoff Eley, and Michael Warner in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*.

promote or suppress affects. As long as we remain strictly within the framework of the rationalist paradigm, we are left with an acquiescent version of democracy that is at the whim of power relations sometimes supplying, other times dismantling, its affective basis.

## **PART II**

### **Dissolving the Demos: A Genealogy of Postwar Democracy**



## CHAPTER 2

### **The Cold War Origins of Instrumental Democracy**

“If we suppose government to have bestowed a degree of tranquility ... as the best of its fruits, and public affairs to proceed ... with the least possible interruption to commerce and lucrative arts; such a state ... is more akin to despotism than we are apt to imagine.”

--Adam Ferguson (1767)<sup>1</sup>

“[T]his war machine is terrifying not as a function of a possible war that it promises us ... [but] as a function of the real, very special kind of peace it promotes and has already installed ... [T]his war machine does no longer needs a qualified enemy but ... operates against the “unspecified enemy,” domestic or foreign.”

--Gilles Deleuze and Félix Gattari (1987)<sup>2</sup>

In the previous chapter I examined how democracy requires affective prerequisites, which are not free-floating but always attached to, and configured by, historically specific institutions, norms, and practices. By presuming the existence of the affective basis of its universal principles, the rationalist paradigm fails to acknowledge that it presupposes a particular subjectivity inhabiting a particular world, effectively keeping us from asking whether *that* world still, if ever, exists. Democratic disaffection that plagues both old and new democracies today gives us reason to be skeptical about the rationalist paradigm’s presumptuous gesture toward affect, and compels us to interrogate *our* world—subjectivities and affects that reside in it. The following three chapters conduct that interrogation.

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<sup>1</sup> Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, ed. Fania Oz-Salzberger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 254-255.

<sup>2</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Gattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 467.

In this chapter, I examine how instrumental democracy emerged during and after World War II as an assemblage of technologies, images, discourses, values, and prejudices. As noted in the Introduction, the desire to instrumentalize democracy is as old as democracy itself. However, it is during the Cold War that constitutive elements of instrumental democracy gelled and cohered enough to form a unitary frame. Specifically, I focus on three such constitutive elements. First, I trace how the concept and imagery of totalitarianism emerged as a powerful political symbol in the postwar era. As an all-embracing term that includes Fascism, Nazism, and Soviet Communism, totalitarianism came to epitomize the radical antithesis of democracy. In the postwar years, there was a pervasive notion that collectivities were the breeding ground of totalitarianism, and it powerfully drove an individualist reconstruction of democracy under the name of anti-totalitarianism. Second, I analyze the argument that emerged as part of anti-totalitarianism and served as the organizing principle of the individualist reconstruction of democracy. Articulated and popularized most notably by Friedrich A. Hayek, this argument correlates democracy with the capitalist economy and posits individuals conforming to the rules of the capitalist market as the foundation of democracy. Championing capitalism as the only guarantee of individual freedom, the Hayekian doctrine proposes to circumscribe democratic politics and discipline citizens so as to preserve capitalism in its purest form. Last, I examine how the contours of democracy shaped by anti-totalitarianism and Hayekian economic liberalism were reinforced by highly bureaucratic and technocratic practices. What undergirded the postwar variant of bureaucracy were a heightened sense of national security threats and the idea of “scientific management.” These two key elements of postwar technocracy not only justified a politically insulated decision-making process but also the application of logics and techniques developed for war purposes to civilian politics, perilously compromising the basic premise of democracy that regards people as the

foundation of legitimacy. While the relationship between these individual components of instrumental democracy was not entirely tension-free, they nonetheless worked together to the effect of dissolving crucial dimensions of democracy—collective subjectivities, public action, and the idea of the common good.

To put my argument in perspective, a word on the general atmosphere of postwar America may be in order. Postwar America was a place infused with fear and optimism. On the one hand, there was an extreme anxiety generated by a fear of Communism. To be sure, Americans had already been alarmed by the rise of authoritarian governments in the 1920s and the 1930s. But the perceived threat to the “American way of life” was intensified and given urgency after the Second World War by the apocalyptic vision of nuclear warfare. Equally frightening were clandestine, psychological, and ideological operations said to be invisible yet rampant at home. Especially after the highly publicized trials of a top State Department official Alger Hiss (1948-1950) and the Rosenbergs (1950-1953), politicians such as Richard Nixon and Joseph McCarthy, journalists including Whittaker Chambers (a senior editor of *Time* who accused Hiss of being a Soviet spy) and William F. Buckley (the founder of *National Review*), and the popular media (e.g., movies<sup>3</sup>) joined forces in creating a terrifying image that communists and their sympathizers are everywhere engaging in a

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<sup>3</sup> While movie attendance began to drop after 1946, movies were still the major conveyer of images in postwar America. One of the most prevalent themes was the annihilation of the human race or the brainwashing by other-worldly creatures like aliens. Susan Sontag provides a shrewd analysis of the 1950s science fiction films, which is, in my view, also an apt description of the American psyche at the time. “[T]hese films supply ... extreme moral simplification—that is to say, a morally acceptable fantasy where one can give outlet to cruel or at least amoral feelings ... The sense of superiority over the freak conjoined ... with the titillation of fear and aversion makes it possible for moral scruples to be lifted, for cruelty to be enjoyed ... [Meanwhile] [t]here is absolutely no ... criticism ... of the conditions of our society which create the impersonality and dehumanization which science fiction fantasies displace onto the influence of an alien.” Susan Sontag, “The Imagination of Disaster (1965),” in *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (New York: Picador, 1961), 215, 223.

conspiracy leading to a Soviet takeover.<sup>4</sup> The whole country, as the historian Richard Hofstadter wrote, was caught in hysteria and paranoia.<sup>5</sup>

This boundless fear was combined, almost perversely, with optimism about America's national character and prosperity. After all, America has won the war, and spectacularly so. The atomic bomb was not only a reason for great anxiety but also a vivid demonstration of the nation's virtually incontestable power. President Harry S. Truman attested to this sense of pride a few days after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in declaring that "we have emerged from this war the most powerful nation in the world—the most powerful nation, perhaps, in all history."<sup>6</sup> And the confidence in the nation's military might was only bolstered by its economic prosperity. The GNP increased from \$181.8 billion (1929) to \$282.3 billion (1947) to \$439.9 billion (1960), while personal consumption increased from \$128.1 billion (1929) to \$195.6 billion (1947) to \$298.1 billion (1960).<sup>7</sup> Americans were surrounded and captivated by commodities—newly built homes, shiny cars, eye-catching appliances, and the supermarket—that transmitted signs of affluence and solicited mass consumption.

While fear and optimism may well coexist in any time of historical changes, what was unique about the postwar period was that those affective states were perceived to come from territories completely separate and diametrically opposed: fear from outside, optimism inside. This dichotomous worldview reinforced, and was reinforced by, the struggle to simplify, purify, and rigidify "the outside" and "the inside." My contention is that external boundaries as well as the internal structure of

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<sup>4</sup> For the "Red Menace," see David Cate, *The Great Fear: The Anti-Communist Purge Under Truman and Eisenhower* (Simon & Schuster, 1978); Ellen W. Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998); Richard M. Fried, *Nightmare in Red: the McCarthy Era in Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

<sup>5</sup> Richard Hofstadter, *Paranoid Style in American Politics, and Other Essays* (New York: Knopf, 1965).

<sup>6</sup> Harry S. Truman, "Radio Report to the American People on the Potsdam Conference (August 9, 1945)," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, 1945*, 213.

<sup>7</sup> Figures cited in Robert M. Collins, *More: The Politics of Economic Growth in Postwar America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 41.

instrumental democracy came into shape in the midst of this struggle. The concept and imagery of totalitarianism was particularly crucial to demarcating external boundaries, as it condemned all political visions centered on collective subjectivities and actions as variants of Nazism and Soviet Communism. And Hayekian economic liberalism shaped the internal structure of instrumental democracy by restructuring democratic politics in accordance with the basic tenets of capitalism. Finally, the sciences recruited, guided, and transformed by war—which I call “war sciences”—reinforced instrumental democracy with a distinct conception of citizens as manageable units. The concomitant emergence of anti-totalitarianism, Hayekian economic liberalism, and postwar technocracy is to be seen as a decisive event in the history of democracy, because it furnished intuitive images of human nature and society, as well as technologies to reinforce those images, that would dominate the postwar concept and practice of democracy—the ontology, as it were, of instrumental democracy.

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first section traces the rise of totalitarianism and its political impact. The second section analyzes Hayek’s theory that subjects democracy to capitalism and considers its implications. The last section examines the conjoining of the national security state and war sciences in creating a technocracy that embodies a centralized decision-making structure and a disposition to control and manage citizens. I end the chapter by exploring implications of instrumental democracy by analyzing Joseph Schumpeter’s procedural theory of democracy.

### **Totalitarianism as Democracy’s “Other”**

When World War II was drawing to an end, Truman celebrated his country’s impending victory. “It was a victory of one way of life over another. It was a victory of an ideal founded on the rights of the common man, on the dignity of the human

being, on the conception of the State as the servant—and not the master—of its people.”<sup>8</sup> Only two years later, however, Truman spoke of the uncertainty of the victory, pointing to the threat posed by the “aggressive movements to impose on [free peoples] totalitarian regimes.” He continued:

“At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one.

One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression.

The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms.”<sup>9</sup>

A starkly dualistic worldview summarized here illustrates the contours of political imagination powerfully shaped by the idea of totalitarianism. We may begin by noting that he made no direct reference to the Soviet Union even though it was clearly what he had in mind (he pointed out Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria as the countries under the threat of totalitarianism). From this conspicuous silence as well as the grand language he used, one gets a sense that Truman intended to portray the Soviet Union as part of something more profound. The Soviet Union, he seems to imply, is not simply an individual country that happens to come into conflict with the United States. It is, instead, a symbol of a contending civilization (if one could call it a civilization) which fundamentally threatens everything America stands for, just as Fascism and Nazism did a few years ago. By extending the use of the term totalitarianism, originally referring to Fascism and Nazism, to include Soviet Communism, Truman

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<sup>8</sup> Truman, “Radio Report,” 213.

<sup>9</sup> Harry S. Truman, “Special Message to the Congress on Greece and Turkey: The Truman Doctrine (March 12, 1947),” *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, 1947*, 178.

invoked continuities between the Second World War and what was about to become the Cold War. By invoking totalitarianism as a description of the ultimate enemy, moreover, Truman completely externalizes totalitarianism as the Other that necessitates a preservation, not a critique, of liberal democracy.

Truman's implicit claims about totalitarianism were foreign to the term when it first gained currency in the English-speaking world in the mid-1930s.<sup>10</sup> Under the influence of émigré scholars, many of them fugitives from Hitler's Germany, the term was used only to analyze German Nazism and Italian Fascism. Concerned primarily with the economy in the aftermath of the Great Depression and influenced by the Marxist framework, many scholars in this period tended to see totalitarianism as a reaction to the crisis of capitalism. Max Lerner, a student of Charles Beard and Thorstein Veblen, exemplified this intellectual climate when he suggested that support for Fascism and Nazism was based on middle-class fears stemming from the Depression, which is the "logical consequence ... of our capitalist-individualist economic organization and our system of nation-states."<sup>11</sup> Naturally, those with this point of view highlighted differences, not similarities, between totalitarianism and communism: the former is a deterioration of the problem to which the latter is an attempted solution. By the same token, liberalism, not communism, was thought to contain the seeds of totalitarianism. Most notably, Herbert Marcuse expressed this point of view when he argued that the contradiction of liberalism lies in the fact that it elevates reason as the foundation of society while at the same time completely instrumentalizing and privatizing reason. As a pure instrument, privatized reason is

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<sup>10</sup> The term "totalitarianism" was used as early as 1923 in Italy, and later in Germany, by those who criticized liberal democracy and called for a stronger state. At the time, however, the term was neither clearly defined nor widely accepted. For the debate surrounding this term in Italy and Germany, see Abbott Gleason, *Totalitarianism: The Inner History of the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), chap. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Max Lerner, "The Pattern of Dictatorship," in *Dictatorship in the Modern World*, ed. Guy Stanton Ford (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1935), 6. See also Franz L. Neumann, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942).

unable to deal with generality that determines its goal. This void realm of generality is thus left vulnerable to irrational forces relying on “blood and soil,” “*Volk*,” or “totality.”<sup>12</sup> Thus viewed, as Marcuse articulates in his later works, totalitarianism is not just a “terroristic political coordination of society” but also a “non-terroristic economic-technical coordination which operates through the manipulation of needs.”<sup>13</sup> It is, in other words, a culture in which alternate possibilities are essentially foreclosed, and liberalism is just as complicit with it as the dictatorships it excoriates.

This radical critique of totalitarianism would become more influential in the 1960s, but it was far from fashionable in the 1930s and 1940s. Instead, totalitarianism was constructed as an umbrella term that lumps together Italian Fascism, German Nazism, and Soviet Communism as the ultimate threat to the United States and its fundamental values. Beginning in the mid-1930s, numerous newspapers and journalists began to note significant, if impressionistic, similarities between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in their violent suppression of the opposition.<sup>14</sup> In particular, Hitler’s purge of SA in June 1934 and Stalin’s purge following the assassination of Sergei Kirov in December 1934 drew considerable attention. The *Kansas City Star* commented that the purges revealed “the real basis of power in every dictatorship, whether Communist or Fascist.” Even liberal journals such as the *New Republic*, then more sympathetic to the Soviet Union, admitted that the Kirov purge “forcibly recalls the thirtieth of June in Germany.”<sup>15</sup> After the 1937 purge trials in Moscow, even intellectuals on the Left came to draw explicit parallels between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. John Dewey—the leading Left intellectual who

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<sup>12</sup> Herbert Marcuse, “The Struggle Against Liberalism in the Totalitarian View of the State (1934),” in *Negations: Essays in Critical Theory*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), 3-42, esp. 15-19.

<sup>13</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), 3.

<sup>14</sup> For a detailed account, see Thomas R. Maddux, “Red Fascism, Brown Bolshevism: The American Image of Totalitarianism in the 1930s,” *The Historian* 40 (1977), 89-94.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 89.



headed the committee that investigated the charges made against Leon Trotsky—conveyed a widely shared sentiment when he made the following remark while announcing his committee’s vindication of Trotsky on CBS radio: “Next time anybody says to you that we have to choose between Fascism and Communism, ask him what is the difference between the Hitlerite Gestapo and the Stalinite G.P.U. so that a democracy should have to choose between one or the other.”<sup>16</sup> And the Nazi-Soviet nonaggression pact in August 1939 virtually put the seal on this trend. A strong consensus on the Nazi-Soviet identification emerged during 1939 and 1941,<sup>17</sup> and briefly subsided after Germany’s 1941 attack on the Soviet Union and the following U.S.-Russia alliance, only to completely dictate the terms of political discourse in postwar America.

As implied in Dewey’s remark, the identification of the Soviet Union and totalitarianism went hand in hand with the attempt to posit liberal democracy as the antithesis of totalitarianism. This dualism was reinforced further by the heated political battle over the New Deal. Totalitarianism became a unifying symbol of the anti-New Deal movement that helped conservatives recover from their crushing defeat in 1932 and regain their voice in the mid-1930s. Many prominent figures on the Right accused the Roosevelt administration of taking the country in the direction of totalitarianism. Raoul Desvernine complained that the New Deal creates a government so powerful and centralized “as to give it the appearance, if not the substance, of a totalitarian State” and that “the integrity of the individual is trampled upon by the organized mob of government agents.”<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Herbert Hoover claimed that a “vast centralization of power in the Executive” is “the first step of economic Regimentation” that

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<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Gleason, *Totalitarianism*, 44.

<sup>17</sup> Les K. Adler and Thomas G. Paterson, “Red Fascism: The Merger of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in the American Image of Totalitarianism, 1930s-1950s,” *American Historical Review* 75(4) (1970), 1049-1050.

<sup>18</sup> Raoul E. Desvernine, *Democratic Despotism* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1936), 205, 226.

“emulat[es] parts of [Fascism, Socialism, or Communism].”<sup>19</sup> Facing the rising tide of totalitarianism abroad, even liberals began to waver. Most notably, Walter Lippmann, a fervent supporter of economic planning in the early 1930s, switched his position within a matter of a few years and came out denouncing New Deal progressivism along with totalitarianism, socialism, and communism under the single heading of “collectivism,” contrasting it to democracy: “a democratic people cannot have a planned economy ... [I]n so far as they desire a planned economy they must suspend responsible government.”<sup>20</sup> Other liberals did not go quite as far as Lippmann did, but many of them were beginning to harbor uncertainty about the relationship between the economic system and democracy. As we will examine in the next section, under mounting pressure, and especially after his hugely unpopular attempts at the “court packing” and executive reorganization in the midst of the unexpected economic downturn in 1937,<sup>21</sup> Roosevelt was forced to scale down the New Deal and defend his policies as a bulwark against a totalitarian revolution on U.S. soil. Gone was the defense of the New Deal as a remedy for the pathologies of liberalism, which had been dominant right up until the mid-1930s.

It is unlikely that the politicians engaged in this political battle had any coherent intellectual framework in mind. In effect, however, they wound up creating a frame that sets liberalism against totalitarianism—a frame that was extremely inhospitable to more nuanced perspectives. A brief look at the diverging fate of Truman and Henry A. Wallace, perhaps two of the most influential Democrats at the time, illustrates how powerful this dichotomous frame was in the late-1940s. After the Republican sweep in the 1946 congressional election, Truman’s aggressive anti-

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<sup>19</sup> Herbert C. Hoover, *The Challenge to Liberty* (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1934), 76, 192.

<sup>20</sup> Walter Lippmann, *The Good Society* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1937), 106.

<sup>21</sup> Both plans ended up raising a doubt about the extent of Roosevelt’s powers and a fear of dictatorship, and irrevocably damaged his popularity. See Thomas E. Lifka, *The Concept “Totalitarianism” and American Foreign Policy, 1933-1949* (New York and London: Garland, 1988), 45-54.

totalitarian rhetoric boosted his popularity.<sup>22</sup> Wallace, who was Roosevelt's vice president from 1941 to 1945, advocated a reconciliatory relation with the Soviet Union in his 1948 presidential campaign, only to earn a minuscule million votes.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, both as a label for all the "evil" countries and as a metaphor against which liberal democracy was pitted, totalitarianism was a normatively as well as politically charged symbol rather than a neutral representation of reality.<sup>24</sup> The term was constructed by the historical events as much as it was by bleak images furnished by such novels as Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* (1940), Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1939), and especially George Orwell's *1984* (1949), often against the intention of the authors.<sup>25</sup> George Kennan, who is widely considered the architect of the containment policy against the Soviet Union but later turned into a critic of the "militarization" of Cold War policies,<sup>26</sup> captured this aspect of totalitarianism in the following remark: "[W]hen I try to picture totalitarianism to myself as a general phenomenon, what comes into my mind most prominently is neither the Nazi picture

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<sup>22</sup> "According to the Gallup Poll, in January 1947, only 35 percent of Americans thought that Truman was handling his job well; by February, his approval rating stood at 48 percent; and by the latter part of the year, it had reached 60 percent." Gleason, *Totalitarianism*, 77.

<sup>23</sup> Wallace's career is also a story of the division and transformation of the American Left. For the "Wallace-Niebuhr division" and the origins of Cold War liberalism, see Mark L. Kleinman, *A World of Hope, a World of Fear: Henry A. Wallace, Reinhold Niebuhr, and American Liberalism* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2000).

<sup>24</sup> Although it received a good deal of attention in the 1950s, the concept of totalitarianism was soon rejected in the scholarly community as ahistorical and imprecise. But it would regain currency among policymakers in the 1970s and especially after the election of Ronald Reagan.

<sup>25</sup> Irritated by the conservatives' appropriation of his novel in their attack on socialism, Orwell wrote in his letter to Francis A. Henson of the United Auto Workers that "my recent novel is NOT intended as an attack on socialism or on the British Labor Party (of which I am a supporter) but as a show-up of the perversions to which a centralised economy is liable and which have already been partly realised in Communism and Fascism ... The scene of the book is laid in Britain in order to emphasise that the English-speaking races are not innately better than anyone else and that totalitarianism, *if not fought against*, could triumph elsewhere." Quoted in Gleason, *Totalitarianism*, 84.

<sup>26</sup> What is commonly known as Kennan's "long telegram" identified a common tendency of totalitarianism and communism toward expansionism and played a crucial role in initiating containment policies. George F. Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct (1946)," *Foreign Relations of the United States*, vol. 6, 1946: *Eastern Europe; the Soviet Union* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1969), 696-709. Kennan's memo was published under pseudonym in *Foreign Affairs* in July, 1947. For Kennan's critique of the "militarization" of his ideas, see "Overdue Changes in Our Foreign Policy," *Harper's* CCXIII (August 1956), 27-33.

nor the Soviet picture as I have known them in the flesh, but rather the fictional and symbolic images created by such people as Orwell or Kafka or Koestler or the early Soviet satirists ... [Totalitarianism] is both a reality and a bad dream ... [I]ts deepest reality lies strangely enough in its manifestation as a dream.”<sup>27</sup> And like other dreamlike symbols, totalitarianism shaped and distorted people’s perception of reality and thereby took history in a certain direction.

For our purposes, it is important to recognize how Cold War anti-totalitarianism served to dismiss the ideal of the *collective pursuit of the common good* as something incompatible with and inimical to democratic politics. Hannah Arendt’s famed *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) was particularly instrumental in popularizing the idea that the masses are the basis of totalitarianism. Arendt argued that “[t]otalitarian movements are possible wherever there are masses who for one reason or another have acquired the appetite for political organization.” The masses, Arendt went on, are “people who either because of sheer numbers, or indifference, or a combination of both, cannot be integrated into any organization based on common interest, into political parties or municipal governments or professional organizations or trade unions. Potentially, the phenomenon of the masses exists in every country and form the majority of those large numbers of neutral, politically indifferent people who never join a party and hardly ever go to the polls.”<sup>28</sup> This was a frightening idea especially in the context of postwar America because, as we will see in the next chapter, almost all empirical evidence available at the time suggested that most Americans were precisely such “neutral, politically indifferent people.” As I will argue in Chapter 5, Arendt herself was interested not so much in condemning the masses as

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<sup>27</sup> George F. Kennan, “Totalitarianism in the Modern World,” in *Totalitarianism: Proceedings of a Conference Held at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, March 1953*, ed. Carl Friedrich (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954), 19-20.

<sup>28</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, 1966 [1951]), 311.

an ontological entity as in understanding the historical process through which the masses were produced as a dominant mode of political existence. But it was her description of affinities between totalitarianism and the masses that stuck in Cold War America. And it was appropriated as a major rationale for a crusade against *all* collective subjectivities and actions.<sup>29</sup>

While the individualist reconstruction of democratic politics was driven by anti-totalitarianism, its success can also be attributed to the fact that it resonated with other powerful intellectual currents at the time. First and foremost, the postwar years saw the formation of a new consensus on human nature. Given the experience of two atrocious wars, it is no surprise that this consensus struck a pessimistic, tragic note. While it was typically conservatives who warned against putting too much faith in human capacity, the liberals of the postwar period were no less emphatic in voicing the same concern. Reinhold Niebuhr, a theologian of progressive persuasion, declared that “[t]he utopian illusions and sentimental aberrations of modern liberal culture are really all derived from the basic error of negating the fact of original sin.”<sup>30</sup> In his hugely influential book *The Vital Center* (1949)—one of the manifestoes of Cold War Liberalism—Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., stated, approvingly citing Niebuhr, that “[t]he Soviet experience, on top of the rise of fascism, reminded my generation rather forcibly that man was, indeed, imperfect, and that the corruptions of power could unleash great evil in the world. We discovered a new dimension of experience—the dimension of anxiety, guilt and corruption.”<sup>31</sup> Claiming that the most frightening feature of totalitarianism was its attempt to “liquidate the tragic insights which gave man a sense of his limitations,” Schlesinger insisted that the problems of society can

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<sup>29</sup> For the reception of *Origins*, see Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Why Arendt Matters* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), chap. 1.

<sup>30</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, vol. 1 (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1941), 273.

<sup>31</sup> Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Vital Center: The Politics of Freedom*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962), xi.

be found not simply in unjust political and economic institutions but more fundamentally in the fact that human beings were often corrupted by the “dark, slumbering forces” in their own psyches.<sup>32</sup>

To some extent, this pessimistic view of human nature was a carryover from the interwar years. The experience of the conflict-ridden early twentieth century and the First World War had already dealt a serious blow to liberals’ belief in the ideal of the citizen and the common good as the unifying foundation of democracy. There is, however, a crucial difference between what might be called “interwar pessimism” and its postwar variant. Although it raised doubts about the existence of a common good, interwar pessimism championed radical action for social justice, embracing conflicts as the inevitable consequence. Niebuhr made this point clear in his *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, published in 1932. There he argued that the attempt to find or nurture a moral consensus on the common good in the political arena is futile and naïve, because such a consensus is not waiting to be achieved as soon as ignorance or lack of morality is overcome but blocked by the privileged class that tries to maintain its interest. This means that “[w]hen collective power, whether in the form of imperialism or class domination, exploits weakness, it can never be dislodged unless power is raised against it.”<sup>33</sup> Thus, according to Niebuhr, what we must do is not to deny the fact that “[c]onflict is inevitable, and in this conflict power must be challenged by power” but to find out how to attain social justice *through* that conflict.<sup>34</sup> Crucially, Niebuhr emphasized that the recognition of the inevitability of differing interests and social conflicts must not make us accept the idea of “accommodation” as a solution. As he forcefully wrote: “A favorite counsel of the social scientists is that of accommodation. If two parties are in a conflict, let them, by conferring together,

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., xxiii, 56-57, 165.

<sup>33</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1932), xii.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., xv.

moderate their demands and arrive at a *modus vivendi* ... Undoubtedly there are innumerable conflicts which must be resolved in this fashion. But will a disinherited group, such as the Negroes for instance, ever win full justice in society in this fashion? Will not even its most minimum demands seem exorbitant to the dominant whites, among whom only a very small minority will regard the inter-racial problem from the perspective of objective justice? Or how are the industrial workers to [negotiate] with industrial owners, when the owners possess so much power that they can win the debate with the workers, no matter how unconvincing their arguments? Only a very few sociologists seem to have learned an adjustment of a social conflict, caused by the disproportion of power in society, will hardly result in justice as long as the disproportion of power remains.”<sup>35</sup> As evidenced by many interwar liberals’ enthusiastic support for a sit-down strike of the United Automobile Workers at the General Motors plant in Flint, Michigan, in December 1936,<sup>36</sup> interwar pessimism was combined with deep commitment to the collective, if not consensual, pursuit of social justice.

Almost reversing the position of interwar pessimism, postwar pessimism took the same recognition about the practical impossibility of attaining a common good through moral education and persuasion alone, and used it as a basis of an argument for moderating demands so as not to threaten political stability. One can detect this subtle yet significant shift in the thought of Niebuhr himself. While he was still issuing the same warning against utopian ideals, Niebuhr’s emphasis had already shifted from radical activism to orderly pluralism near the end of the Second World War. Stating that the “sadistic cruelties” produced by Nazism’s attempt to establish a “coerced unity”

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., xvii.

<sup>36</sup> For an account of the UAW members’ sit-down strike and the reactions to it, see Marc Stears, *Demanding Democracy: American Radicals in Search of a New Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 107-110.

in the community were a “tremendously valuable lesson for our civilization,” he suggested that democracy must find a way of allowing various interests and perspectives to “express themselves without destroying the unity and life of the community.”<sup>37</sup> Niebuhr went so far as to assert that democratic politics is “a method of finding proximate solutions for insoluble problems,” practically recommending accommodation he specifically rejected in the 1930s.<sup>38</sup> With this, Niebuhr was representing the predominant view of postwar liberalism. While calling for a “revival of American radicalism,” Schlesinger argued that such a new radicalism would be grounded in commitment to “piecemeal” changes through parliamentary institutions and would not “disrupt the fabric of custom, law and mutual confidence.”<sup>39</sup> More bluntly, Seymour Martin Lipset remarked that a “stable democracy” would require a “manifestation” of conflict so as to give the “have-nots” a greater sense of “loyalty ... to the system.”<sup>40</sup> Lipset praised the two-party system for its ability to select “a man of the center” as their presidential nominee, reduce the intensity of political debate, and cement social cohesion.<sup>41</sup> Daniel Bell, too, valorized the American electoral system that forces its participants to make compromises (the “deal”) forgoing their ideals as the “pragmatic counterpart of the philosophic principle of toleration” and, indeed, as “the saving grace” of American politics.<sup>42</sup>

Despite its homage to pluralism, one cannot but sense that postwar pessimism’s focus was on preserving the existing consensus. It was a pluralism, as it were, with too many conditionals: political action is legitimate *if* it remains “within

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<sup>37</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness: A Vindication of Democracy and a Critique of Its Traditional Defense* (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1944), 123-124.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>39</sup> Schlesinger, *Vital Center*, 157, 153-154.

<sup>40</sup> Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1960), 294-295.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 328-330, 444-445.

<sup>42</sup> Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 112.



bounds,” *if* it abides by the “rules of the game,” and *if* does not disrupt “the fabric of custom, law, and mutual confidence.” Conflicts are to be tolerated, postwar pessimism suggests, as long as they do not fundamentally challenge the institutions of Cold War America and people’s supposedly shared attachment to those institutions. We will examine the irony of this consensus-oriented pluralism more closely in the next chapter, but following the Niebuhr of the 1930s, one is led to wonder: when the deepest root of social conflicts lies in the disproportion of power, how can one resolve those conflicts in any genuine sense without addressing the problem of disproportionate power relations? How can one change power relations without challenging the rules of the game that work in favor of the privileged?

In addition to postwar pessimism’s wary and even disciplining disposition toward collective action outside formal institutions, the conviction in democracy as a collective project was shaken further by a whole swath of theories on “mass society”—which Daniel Bell observed to be “Marxism apart ... probably the most influential social theory in the world today.”<sup>43</sup> As noted above, Arendt’s theory that links the masses and totalitarianism was particularly influential, but other worrying accounts of the masses flooded postwar America. “The mass man,” Dwight MacDonald wrote, “is a solitary atom, uniform with and undifferentiated from thousands of millions of other atoms who go to make up the “lonely crowd” [in David Riesman’s term].”<sup>44</sup> And mass culture was thought to exacerbate the conformist tendency inherent in the masses deprived of both individuality and solidarity, threatening, in Bernard Rosenberg’s words, “not merely to cretinize our taste, but to

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 21. Bell provides a good summary and critique of this literature in *The End of Ideology*, chap. 1.

<sup>44</sup> Dwight MacDonald, “A Theory of Mass Culture,” in *Mass Culture: Popular Arts in America*, eds., Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1957), 69. David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1950).

brutalize our sense while paving the way to totalitarianism.”<sup>45</sup> The last remark betrays the strong connection between the critique of mass society and anti-totalitarianism. Many studies, both popular and academic, asserted that communism—which was presented as the only surviving incarnation of totalitarianism—appealed to those who were emotionally needy and maladjusted.<sup>46</sup> The message was clear enough: it is a mistake to take the term democracy too literally; the attempt to realize the ideal of the “rule of the people” in a society where people are in fact only masses is almost an open invitation to totalitarianism. Despite their otherwise diverse political and ideological standpoints, many intellectuals shared this fear, and were concerned about the problem that José Ortega y Gasset famously brought to attention: the degeneration of the “old democracy ... tempered by a generous dose of liberalism and of enthusiasm for law” into a “hyperdemocracy in which the mass acts directly, outside the law, imposing its aspirations and its desires by means of material pressure.”<sup>47</sup>

### **The Birth of Capitalist Democracy**

As anti-totalitarianism partly due to its resonances with such powerful intellectual currents as postwar pessimism and the theories of mass society, the ideal of democracy as the collective pursuit of the common good quickly began to erode. But if anti-totalitarianism successfully undermined collectivities as the agents—and the pursuit of the common good as the purpose—of democracy, it still needed to explain what could serve as the alternative basis of democracy. What rose to this challenge, I suggest, was the idea that democracy can best be conceptualized and practiced as a correlate of capitalism. As for the articulation and propagation of this

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<sup>45</sup> Bernard Rosenberg, “Mass Culture in America,” in *Mass Culture*, 9.

<sup>46</sup> Gabriel A. Almond, *The Appeal of Communism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1954). See also Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements* (New York: Harper and Row, 1951).

<sup>47</sup> José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1932), 17-18.

idea, it is hard to overemphasize the influence of Friedrich A. Hayek, not only because he produced a paradigmatic account of this view in his immensely popular *The Road to Serfdom* (1944),<sup>48</sup> but also because he built institutions and mobilized networks of people around that view, epitomized in the Mont Pèlerin Society which arguably became the theoretical hub of neoliberalism well before neoliberalism acquires political influence in the 1970s, as we will examine in Chapter 4.<sup>49</sup> Hayek first convened the Society in 1947 and served as its first president between 1948 and 1960.

In *The Road to Serfdom*, Hayek reverses the Marxist view that diagnoses Nazism as a twisted attempt to perpetuate capitalism, and claims that “the rise of fascism and Nazism was ... a necessary outcome of [socialist] tendencies [in interwar Germany].”<sup>50</sup> He refuses to reduce Nazism to a matter of psychology (“the peculiar wickedness of the Germans”), arguing that institutions, especially economic ones, determine its political system. Exemplifying the logic of the Cold War, Hayek advances a starkly dichotomous worldview. He divides the world into two kinds of economic system: capitalism (posited to be the system of competition) and socialism (posited to be the system of central planning). He, then, correlates those economic systems with liberal democracy and totalitarianism, respectively. As he puts it, “[t]he various kinds of collectivism, communism, fascism, etc., differ among themselves in the nature of the goal toward which they want to direct the efforts of society. But they

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<sup>48</sup> *The Road to Serfdom* made the front page of both the *New York Times* and the *New York Herald Tribune* immediately after its publication. The *Reader's Digest* ran a condensed version in April 1945, and the Book of the Month Club distributed some 600,000 copies of the condensation. Gleason, *Totalitarianism*, 65. Milton Friedman, “Introduction,” in F. A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, fiftieth anniversary edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994 [1944]), xix.

<sup>49</sup> For the creation of the Mont Pèlerin Society and its powerful impact on the production and global dissemination of a neoliberal doctrine, see Dieter Plehwe and Bernhard Walpen, “Between Network and Complex Organization: The Making of Neoliberal Knowledge and Hegemony,” in *Neoliberal Hegemony: A Global Critique*, eds. Dieter Plehwe, Bernhard Walpen, and Gisela Neunhöffer (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 28-50. See also Philip Mirowski and Dieter Plehwe, eds., *The Road from Mont Pèlerin: The Making of the Neoliberal Thought Collective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

<sup>50</sup> Hayek, *Road to Serfdom*, 6. Subsequent references cited parenthetically.

all differ from liberalism and individualism in wanting to organize the whole of society and its resources for its unitary end and in refusing to recognize autonomous spheres in which the ends of the individuals are supreme. In short, they are totalitarian in the true sense of this new word which we have adopted to describe the unexpected but nevertheless inseparable manifestations of what in theory we call collectivism” (63). To be sure, Hayek accepts the need for a “carefully thought-out legal framework,” “government action,” and grudgingly, even some regulation, but only when they serve to promote competition (41-42, 48). But if it interferes with unfettered capitalist competition, even limited regulations are counterproductive, because “both competition and central direction become poor and inefficient tools if they are incomplete; they are principles used to solve the same problem, and a mixture of the two means that neither will really work and that the result will be worse than if either system had been consistently relied upon (48).”

Here it is crucial to get the full picture of Hayek’s defense of what he sometimes calls “economic liberalism,” as it is not simply an argument for the superior efficiency of capitalism in economic matters. Rather, his claim is that *any* attempt to restrict competition and interfere with the working of the market will *inevitably* land us in totalitarianism. As he states, “[i]f “capitalism” means ... a competitive system based on free disposal over private property, ... only within this system is democracy possible. When it becomes dominated by a collectivist creed, democracy will inevitably destroy itself” (77-78).

Hayek’s reasoning behind this conclusion begins with the Cold War platitude that notions such as the “common good,” the “general welfare,” or the “general interest” have “no definite meaning to determine a particular course of action” and “cannot be expressed as a single end.” So-called “social ends,” he writes, are “merely identical ends of many individuals—or ends to the achievement of which individuals

are willing to contribute in return for the assistance they receive in the satisfaction of their own desires” (67). This contingent nature of the common good, then, creates a serious problem for democracy. Since the decision-making in democracy is based upon people’s agreement, central planning that “direct[s] all our activities according to a single plan” cannot move forward without the “existence of a complete ethical code in which all the different human values are allotted their due place” (64). In other words, planning, per Hayek’s definition, requires that we “agree on a much larger number of topics than we have been used to” (69). The formation of such a broad agreement on social ends is impossible, and if it happens to occur, it is “not likely to be formed by the best but rather by the worst elements of any society” (152). When one tries to form a consensus on the common good, “the worst get on top” because “in general, the higher the education and intelligence of individuals become, the more their views and tastes are differentiated and the less likely they are to agree on a particular hierarchy of values.” For a “high degree of uniformity,” Hayek asserts, “we have to descend to the regions of lower moral and intellectual standards where the more primitive and “common” instincts and tastes prevail ... [We need to turn to] those who form the “mass” in the derogatory sense of the term, the least original and independent” (152). Moreover, even if it is possible to form a unanimous agreement on the common good, untainted by “common instincts and tastes,” democratic governments will never be able to realize it in their doomed attempt to find agreement on every particular aspects of the planning. This incompetence will “inevitably cause dissatisfaction with democratic institutions,” and “evoke stronger and stronger demands that the government or some single individual should be given powers to act on their own responsibility.” In the end, “[t]he belief is becoming more and more widespread that, if things are to get done, the responsible authorities must be freed from the fetters of democratic procedure” (69, 75). This is why, as Hayek memorably

declares, “the cry for an economic dictator is a characteristic stage in the movement toward planning” (75). Planning is, for Hayek, like a train with a broken break; once it is set in motion, no one can stop it from overloading, paralyzing, and ultimately destroying democracy with an ever-increasing demand for agreement on individual values and social ends.

This is a skillfully simple, and for that reason powerful, logic. But a closer look reveals that it rests on obscure reasoning and normatively charged assumptions. Hayek, for example, confounds the normative necessity of fomenting democratic contestation *around* the common good with the empirical difficulty of attaining, once and for all, a unanimous consensus *on* one. But the difficulty, even impossibility, of forming a perfect consensus at a particular moment cannot be the reason to abandon the pursuit of the common good as such. Democracy is an indispensable political ideal, not because it is the most sure or efficient way of realizing individual preferences but because it is built on the normative expectation that it would value *universal* demands—demands for the sake of the demos or the common good—over particular ones. Of course, this universality is not a fixed entity but a temporary outcome of democratic contestation. This is why it is crucial for a democracy to make sure that that contestation takes place, and again, on equal terms. Put another way, the most important task of democracy is to preserve and promote substantial political freedom, and other forms of freedom are to be understood in terms of that central task.

Hayek argues the exact opposite: economic freedom must precede political freedom. His central concern, as he puts it, is the dire fact that “[w]e have progressively abandoned that freedom in economic affairs without which personal and political freedom has never existed in the past” (16). To be sure, attaining *substantial* political freedom requires a certain form of economic freedom (I discuss this point more extensively in Chapter 5). But Hayek does not suggest that economic freedom

promote political freedom. Rather, he contends that economic freedom must be preserved *at the expense of* political freedom, or more precisely, that political freedom must be restricted so as to guarantee the capitalist form of economic freedom to the fullest extent.

To understand how Hayek's prioritization of economic freedom undermines political freedom, we need to examine his defense of capitalism more carefully. Hayek's overarching argument rests on his emphasis on the limitation of human knowledge, which is well summarized in the following statement: "The peculiar character of the problem of a rational economic order is determined precisely by the fact that the knowledge of the circumstances of which we must make use never exists in concentrated or integrated form, but solely as dispersed bits of incomplete and frequently contradictory knowledge which all the separate individuals possess. The economic problem of society is thus not merely a problem of how to allocate "given" resources ... [I]t is a problem of the utilization of knowledge which is not given to anyone in its totality."<sup>51</sup> Based on this recognition, Hayek portrays capitalism—and competition as its essence—as a coordination mechanism that brings together and processes dispersed knowledge. As he puts it, "[c]ompetition is ..., like experimentation in science, first and foremost a discovery procedure ... Competition must be seen as a process in which people acquire and communicate knowledge."<sup>52</sup>

Hayek's epistemological vision of capitalism is intriguingly mystical, as he takes the valuable insight (the limitation of human knowledge) and embeds it in an obscure mix of metaphysics and evolutionary theory, constantly moving back and forth between economics and general human culture. Consider, for example, the

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<sup>51</sup> F. A. Hayek, "The Use of Knowledge in Society (1945)," in *Individualism and Economic Order* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 77-78.

<sup>52</sup> F. A. Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty*, vol. 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 68-69. Subsequent references cited parenthetically.

following statement: “Competition as a discovery procedure must rely on self-interest of the producers ... [I]t must allow them to use their knowledge for their purposes, because nobody else possesses the information on which they must base their decision.” Here Hayek gives the impression that he uses the term “self-interest” broadly to denote people’s motivations *in general* (“their purposes”). But in the very same paragraph he reveals that he means by “self-interest” only *economic* motivations. “[W]e rely on self-interest because only through it can we induce producers to use knowledge which we do not possess ... The inducement to improve the manner of production will often consist in the fact that whoever does so first will thereby gain a temporary profit. Many of the improvements of production are due to each striving for such profits” (70). (For this reason, Hayek goes on to argue that it is “desirable not only to tolerate monopolies but even to allow them to exploit their monopolistic positions—so long as they maintain them solely by serving their customers better than anyone else, and not by preventing those who think they could do still better from trying to do so.” 73) This is not the place to dispute Hayek’s claim that producers will seek profit only by increasing productivity. The more curious point for us is his assertion that unfettered capitalist competition is the only way to operate a “discovery procedure” and thus the only path to cultural evolution, if not progress.

There is much to ponder about Hayek’s plea to the concept of cultural evolution. Rejecting the bifurcated view of human values between “natural” and “artificial,” between desire and reason, he argues it is “culture”—“a tradition of learnt rules of conduct which have never been ‘invented’ and whose functions the acting individuals usually do not understand”—that shapes our concerns and behaviors (155). However, Hayek’s specific arguments about cultural evolution are strikingly dubious. He remarked: “The transition from the small band to the settled community and *finally to the open society and with it to civilization* was due to men learning to obey the same



abstract rules instead of being guided by innate instincts to pursue common perceived goals” (160, emphasis added). In his characteristic move, Hayek equates the market economy (which he uses synonymously with the “open society,” 162) with civilization itself, and strongly implies that it is the final destination of cultural evolution. It is here that Hayek’s concept of evolution as a purportedly neutral process of “cultural selection” betrays its own teleological and normative baggage. As he admits, “I have so far carefully avoided saying that evolution is identical with progress, but when it becomes clear that it was the evolution of a tradition which made civilization possible, we may at least say that spontaneous evolution is a necessary if not a sufficient condition of progress” (168). Seen in this light, Hayek’s argument is not prospective as he claims but in fact *retrospective*. He champions capitalism not because it opens up room for cultural progress but because its perceived achievement—productivity and material abundance—is what *he* endorses. Within this framework, Hayek’s emphasis on the limitation of human knowledge no longer works as a humbling reminder of human finitude but as a defense mechanism of market capitalism. Since the evolutionary process culminating in capitalism came about by individuals following rules they do not fully understand, they cannot change its course even if they find the consequences of capitalism pernicious. “Man has been civilized very much against his wishes” (168).

The last point—that cultural evolution *qua* capitalist development occurs against keenly felt human needs—illuminates profoundly authoritarian tendencies of Hayek’s theory: he does not simply champion the objective aspect of capitalism such as productivity. Rather, he promotes a specific kind of subjectivity that abides by rules of market capitalism. This subjectivity is attuned with what Hayek calls “rational behavior” which he contrasts to “emotions” or “innate instincts.” According to him, “emotions” belong to the “kind of society in which [man] had lived in the dim past”

where, as hunters and gatherers, human beings pursued “common perceived goals” (160). Singling out the claim that sharing was a way of life in primitive human society, Hayek insists “these habits [of sharing] had to be shed to make the transition to the market economy and the open society possible” (162). What troubles him, then, is the recalcitrant fact that people still do not realize their disposition to share and pursue the common good is not consistent with the current stage of their evolution. Such a disposition is too deeply ingrained in our existence; to catch up with civilization, therefore, we need to reprogram ourselves.<sup>53</sup> “The conduct required for the preservation of a small band of hunters and gatherers, and that presupposed by an open society based on exchange, are very different. But while mankind had hundreds of thousands of years to acquire and genetically to embody the responses need for the former, it was necessary for the rise of the latter that he not only learned to acquire new rules, but that *some of the new rules served precisely to repress the instinctive reactions no longer appropriate to the Great Society* [i.e., the capitalist society]” (164, emphasis added).

Hayek felt that “innate instincts” were becoming threateningly pervasive in his time. “At present, ... an ever increasing part of the population of the Western World grow up as members of large organizations and thus as strangers to those rules of the market which have made the great open society possible. To them the market economy is largely incomprehensible; they have never practised the rules on which it rests, and its results seem to them irrational and immoral. They often see in it merely an arbitrary structure maintained by some sinister power. In consequence, the long-submerged

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<sup>53</sup> In this respect, I think it is misleading to suggest, as Bruce Caldwell did in his otherwise judicious biography of Hayek, that “Hayek’s agent is a real human being who inhabits a specific social space, not some atomistic and asocial automaton.” Hayek presumes a particular subjectivity that responds to certain signals, and not to others. Bruce Caldwell, *Hayek’s Challenge: An Intellectual Biography of F. A. Hayek* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 286.

innate instincts have again surged to the top. Their demand for a just distribution ... [is] based on primordial emotions” (165; see also 160).

With a deep suspicion toward the opposition to what he firmly believes is *the* foundation of civilization, Hayek enters a precarious territory. If people will not behave rationally on their own, we may have to induce them to do so. Contradicting his own claim that rationality is what emerges out of spontaneous social coordination, Hayek sets out to devise a “method” that would inculcate rationality within individuals. This is possible because rationality is not a given quality, but the outcome of institutional arrangements. As he puts it, “rational behavior is not a premise of economic theory ... The basic contention of theory is rather that competition will make it necessary for people to act rationally in order to maintain themselves” (75). Or, more bluntly: “Competition is as much a method for breeding certain types of mind as anything else” (76). Also, Hayek does not forget to give us a more specific description of how “competition” works. Economic theory is “based not on the assumption that most or all the participants in the market process are rational, but, on the contrary, on the assumption that it will in general be through competition that *a few relatively more rational individuals* will make it necessary for the rest to emulate them in order to prevail” (75, emphasis added).

Thus Hayek’s method that would stem the rising tide of “emotional” demands for justice is centered on the protection of “a few relatively more rational individuals” from the majority of the population who have yet to adjust their behavior to the rules of the capitalist market. But who, exactly, are those rational individuals?

“This should be remembered particularly by those who are inclined to argue that competition will not work among people who lack the spirit of enterprise: let merely a few rise and be esteemed and powerful because they have successfully tried new ways ... and let those tempted

to imitate them be free to do so ... and that spirit of enterprise will emerge by the only method which can produce it” (76).

Hayek’s advocacy of a small cadre of entrepreneurs as proselytizers of capitalism finally reveals the reason why he wants to restrict political freedom in favor of economic freedom. Unfettered capitalism inflicts too much damage on the majority—or in Hayek’s terminology, conflicts too much with our “primordial emotions”—to gain popular support. As he states, “[i]f in a society in which the spirit of enterprise has not yet spread, the majority has power to prohibit whatever it dislikes, it is most unlikely that it will allow competition to arise. I doubt whether a functioning market has ever newly arisen under an unlimited democracy, and it seems at least likely that unlimited democracy will destroy it where it has grown up” (77). From the perspective of cultural evolution Hayek advances, this is of course an unacceptable underdevelopment. If evolution means a devastation of the life of the majority, so be it: that is a small cost to pay to make progress toward, and remain in, “civilization.” “The intellectual growth of a community,” Hayek asserts, again conveniently switching from economic to epistemological registers, “rests on the views of a few gradually spreading, even to the disadvantage of those who are reluctant to accept them” (76).

To rescue democracy from spiraling into barbarism, Hayek proposes to circumscribe democracy so as to ensure that the majority’s demands cannot infringe upon the economic freedom of a few entrepreneurs. Already in *The Road to Serfdom*, he argued that democracy is “essentially a means, a utilitarian device for safeguarding internal peace and individual freedom” (78). Now writing in the late 1970s, Hayek calls for the “dethronement of politics” (128). The currently “prevailing form of democracy” that interferes with the working of capitalism, he decries, “is ultimately self-destructive.” “It is therefore necessary to restrain these powers in order to protect democracy against itself,” and more specifically, “it will be necessary to make

provision against the ever-recurring infection with such illusions that is bound again and again to cause an inadvertent slide into socialism (149).” As such a cure for the “ever-recurring infection,” Hayek proposes a “model constitution” centered on a legislative upper house armed with a number of “safeguards” that would keep it insulated from political pressures. (Its members, for example, would be guaranteed a position of lay judges after serving as legislators a single term of fifteen years) (105-127, esp. 111-117). Hayek speculates that his model constitution would be particularly useful for “those new countries which, without a tradition ever remotely similar to the ideal of the Rule of Law which the nations of Europe have long held, have adopted from the latter the institutions of democracy without the foundations of beliefs and convictions presupposed by those institutions” (108). His prediction would be realized with a cruel irony. As we will see in Chapter 4, Hayek’s institutional design would be adopted by Augusto Pinochet’s authoritarian regime in Chile as a means to repress and dissipate democratic beliefs and convictions.

Although it was never a dominant view, Hayek’s correlation of democracy and capitalism exerted substantial ideological and political influence in the postwar period. (As we will examine in Chapter 4, the full-fledged economic restructuring of politics implicit in the Hayekian doctrine will begin to materialize starting in the 1970s with the rise of neoliberalism.) Most importantly, it played a crucial role in transforming the New Deal, the reigning ideology of the day. Since its inception and up until the mid-1930s, the New Deal was concerned primarily with the regulation by the government of the structure and performance of capitalism. As noted in the previous section, however, the New Deal was put under enormous pressure in the late-1930s, as opponents mobilized around anti-totalitarianism and supporters, alarmed by the spread of totalitarian regimes abroad, grew increasingly uneasy with the centralization of power at home. As the historian Alan Brinkley has put it, “few liberals could remain

unaffected by an environment in which the specter of totalitarianism was a staple of public discourse and private thought.”<sup>54</sup> Battered by anti-totalitarianism, the regulatory strand of the New Deal gradually yet definitively gave way to the hitherto marginal Keynesian position that viewed the government essentially as a compensatory, not a regulatory, agency.<sup>55</sup> Like the regulatory position, the Keynesian approach emphasized government spending, but not to directly promote and guide the production (e.g., roads, bridges, dams, etc.) but to boost mass consumption in the expectation that it would drive production and investment. As Alvin Hansen, an important economist of the New Deal, presciently remarked as early as in 1940, departing from his earlier advocacy of regulatory policies, “[c]onsumption ... is the frontier of the future.”<sup>56</sup> The decline of the regulatory vision has far-reaching implications, as it was accompanied by the demise of a whole range of left economic visions, effectively placing the Keynesian variant of the New Deal at the far left of the ideological spectrum. That this profound change occurred in less than a decade is hard to understand without taking into account the powerful influence of anti-totalitarianism. The horrors of totalitarianism, most powerfully and influentially invoked in Hayek’s work, put liberalism on the defensive. And the correlation of democracy and capitalism, packaged as part of anti-totalitarianism, penetrated, and redirected, liberalism.

Of course, anti-totalitarianism was not the only factor that influenced the transformation of the New Deal. The war achieved something to which various regulatory policies had only aspired for decades: it ended the Great Depression.

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<sup>54</sup> Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War* (New York: Vintage, 1996), 161.

<sup>55</sup> On the internal shift of the New Deal, see Alan Brinkley, “The New Deal and the Idea of the State,” in *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980*, eds. Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 85-121.

<sup>56</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 98.

“Between 1939 and 1945, the GNP grew by more than 50 percent. Although the bulk of the growth was a result of military production, the consumer economy expanded by 12 percent during the same years. Unemployment, the most persistent and troubling economic problem of the 1930s, all but vanished.”<sup>57</sup> The incredible wartime economic growth few had foreseen served as nothing short of an inspiration for shifting the focus of the economic system away from production, regulation, and redistribution to demand, consumption, and growth.

In understanding the rise, and the future unfolding, of the Keynesian variant of the New Deal, it is important to note that the war, and the consequent economic boom, exerted a decisive influence on what amounted to a metamorphosis of organized labor as a political force. Throughout the 1930s and the early 1940s, the labor movement put as much effort in forming itself into an independent political force that has a say in the determination of the economic structure as in making specific demands such as higher wages and improved working conditions. Undergoing the war and in the midst of economic prosperity in the postwar years, however, the focus of the labor movement decidedly shifted from solidarity, political organization, and structural reform to raising individual workers’ standard of living.<sup>58</sup> Like the “compensatory turn” of the New Deal, the deradicalization of organized labor would have lasting consequences, few of which were readily visible at the time. One such consequence is the fragmentation of labor. Having largely abandoned its earlier efforts to form an independent political force based on broad social solidarity, organized labor was unable to challenge the postwar economy’s trend toward the segmentation of labor. As Nelson Lichtenstein notes, the postwar economy divided the American working class

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 105n54.

<sup>58</sup> On the changing trajectory of the labor movement, see Nelson Lichtenstein, “From Corporatism to Collective Bargaining: Organized Labor and the Eclipse of Social Democracy in the Postwar Era,” in *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order*, 122-152. See also Brinkley, *The End of Reform*, 201-226.

into relatively favorably placed union members and “a still larger stratum, predominantly young, minority, and female, that was left out in the cold.”<sup>59</sup> This division not only weakened organized labor but ultimately undermined political support for the (modest) welfare state established by the New Deal (e.g., blue-collar workers came to resent state-funded welfare, especially as the tax code became increasingly regressive, whereas unrepresented workers as well as the general population were led to suspect trade unions are merely “interest groups”). Moreover, organized labor’s retreat from structural issues deprived it of capabilities for participating in the reorganization of the political economy, which would prove almost fatal to its existence when the structural basis of the economy shifts as in the 1970s.

In the simultaneously anxious and complacent atmosphere created by anti-totalitarianism and the postwar economic boom, intellectuals, too, failed to fundamentally challenge the Hayekian doctrine, even as they criticized its particular aspects. Most Cold War liberals were impressed by the postwar economy’s extraordinary success in sustaining growth and raising the standard of living for the majority of Americans and, even as they recognized deep-seated problems, glanced over them with a lighthearted expectation that continuing growth would solve them in the long run. For example, Lipset, while admitting that inequality was a problem to be tackled, expressed his admiration at how the expansion of capitalism narrowed the “gap between the living styles” of the various classes by increasing the purchasing power of previously impoverished segments of the population.<sup>60</sup> As liberals decided to find peace with capitalism, Hayek’s claim that the capitalist form of economic freedom is *the* prerequisite for democracy was considered perhaps hysterical but never threatening to democracy. Indeed, many liberals let Hayek’s framing, if not his

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<sup>59</sup> Lichtenstein, “From Corporatism to Collective Bargaining,” 144.

<sup>60</sup> Lipset, *Political Man*, 268-269.



specific arguments, affect their own view of democratic politics. As Theodor Rosenof notes, surveying the reception of Hayek's *Road to Serfdom*, "one of the most interesting things about Hayek's critics—most of whom were New Deal liberals and democratic socialists—was the extent to which they shared Hayek's fear of the totalitarian specter and warned against "too much" government economic intervention ... While in the early and mid-1930s, when the horrors of depression and poverty were foremost in social democrats' minds, many stressed the need for central planning to meet the economic crisis, now, in the 1940s, with the impact of totalitarianism foremost, they rejected central planning as a harbinger of political authority—even though the logic of their own case against Hayek led elsewhere."<sup>61</sup> This trend, moreover, would not be overturned in the subsequent decades. Even a new generation of liberals, who emerged protesting the perceived conservatism of Cold War liberalism, focused mostly on expanding civil liberties and rights to the previously excluded. Rights-based liberalism, of course, also advocated social insurance and public spending. But the fundamental reshaping of capitalism, which had preoccupied American liberalism for a long time, would never reoccupy the center of the debate over democracy.

If anti-totalitarianism and the Hayekian doctrine were more potent than warranted by their intellectual validity, a good deal of it can be attributed to the fact that the United States was waging a war against totalitarianism. In the context of the Cold War, the protection of liberal democracy from totalitarian enemies, outside as well as inside, became a national security issue, the handling of which can bypass, if not override, popular sovereignty. To put it another way, the war helped place the very meaning of democracy beyond the reach of democratic contestation. This ironic

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<sup>61</sup> Theodor Rosenof, "Freedom, Planning, and Totalitarianism: The Reception of F. A. Hayek's *Road to Serfdom*," *Canadian Review of American Studies* 5(2) (1974), 156-157.

practice was defended not only as an emergency, thus temporary, measure but as a perpetual state under the name of “scientific management.” In the next section, let us examine how intellectual justifications for, and technologies of, this management grew out of the Cold War.

### **The National Security State, “War Sciences,” and the Management of Democracy**

The postwar years witnessed the rise of powerful intellectual justifications as well as the institutional infrastructure for a high level of bureaucratic or technocratic practices. To be sure, technocracy was hardly new. Not to mention Weber’s theory of bureaucracy, the ideas of technocracy and social engineering enjoyed something of a fad among Progressive intellectuals in the interwar years and were put to practice especially after the New Deal got underway.<sup>62</sup> But the technocracy of the postwar period was distinct in that it was framed specifically around national security concerns. In the postwar context, moreover, the idea of “national security” itself took on a radically different meaning. The Pearl Harbor attack and the perceived possibility of a nuclear war created a sense that security threats are *ubiquitous* and *constant*. As Michael Latham observes, “[f]rom 1941 through the entire Cold War period, American policymakers would think less in terms of the static, quantifiable, material needs of “defense” and more in terms of the open-ended, ever-changing challenges of “security” ... Rather than attempting to preserve an order based on a balance of power, they began an ideological struggle over the direction of global civilization itself. How, they asked, could the United States create an international environment in which its

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<sup>62</sup> John M. Jordan, *Machine-Age Ideology: Social Engineering and American Liberalism, 1911-1939* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

values and institutions were most likely to spread and grow?”<sup>63</sup> Many policymakers were convinced that this unprecedented security threat could be dealt with only through “scientific management,”<sup>64</sup> and institutionalized a highly centralized and politically insulated bureaucratic structure most notably with the National Security Act of 1947.<sup>65</sup>

While various aspects of the national security state has received extensive attention, what is only beginning to come to light is the extent to which the structure and function of the national security state was intertwined with the concept and practice of science. The intertwining of the national security state and science is to be seen as a mutually transformative event. On the one hand, the Cold War transformed science from a socially engaged undertaking into a politically neutralized technocratic endeavor. A look at the debate in the philosophy of science concerning the nature of science—in particular, positivism (or logical empiricism) which ascended to the orthodox position in postwar America—illustrates this point. When it was first conceived, logical empiricism was not simply a philosophical doctrine; it was a progressive reform project. First generation logical empiricists such as Otto Neurath, Philipp Frank, and Charles Morris shared the belief that the philosophy of science should be politically as well as historically aware, and that a formal study of logic and semantics should be accompanied by the sustained inquiry into values, the sociology of science, and ideologies. While there were disputes over its specific arguments, *this* logical empiricism was generally welcomed in the 1930s by America’s progressive intellectuals (including Dewey) as an attempt to make social progress through a

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<sup>63</sup> Michael L. Latham, “What Price Victory? American Intellectuals and the Problem of Cold War Democracy,” in *The Columbia History of Post-World War II America*, ed. Mark C. Carnes (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 405-406.

<sup>64</sup> For the early articulation of this idea, which was instrumental in determining the frame of the 1947 National Security Act, see Pendleton Herring, *The Impact of War: Our American Democracy Under Arms* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1941).

<sup>65</sup> On the rise of the institutional structure of the national security state, see Amy B. Zegart, *Flawed By Design: The Evolution of the CIA, JCS, and NSC* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999).

symbiosis between science and democracy.<sup>66</sup> But undergoing the Second World War, logical empiricism gradually yet decisively lost its politically engaged vision, and became a formal, abstract, and apolitical field, that is, what we associate today with the name positivism.<sup>67</sup> In the 1950s, new leaders of logical empiricism such as Hans Reichenbach, Herbert Feigl, and Richard Rudner envisioned a lofty and insulated view of the scientific community indifferent to and immune from public debate—a view that is unmistakably in favor of the military-science collaboration during the Cold War.<sup>68</sup> Upon Reichenbach’s portrayal, scientists are governed by an algorithmic logic (“cognition”) alone, while the general populace by “volitions.” For scientific activities, Reichenbach maintains, “it is therefore irrelevant where volitions come from ... [or] whether we are conditioned to our volitions by the milieu in which we grew up.”<sup>69</sup> Positivism’s extraordinary success in postwar America is difficult to understand without considering the fact that political neutrality became its central tenet. As David Hollinger has insightfully remarked, “[i]nvocations of the term “science” tell us “less about how science works than about the cultural conflicts in society at large.”<sup>70</sup>

On the other hand, science profoundly transformed the national security state. The RAND Corporation and its influence on the structure and function of the national security state is a case in point.<sup>71</sup> Worrying that the end of war would turn the

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<sup>66</sup> George A. Reisch, *How the Cold War Transformed Philosophy of Science: To the Icy Slope of Logic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), chaps. 3-4.

<sup>67</sup> For the depoliticization of logical empiricism, see Don Howard, “Two Left Turns Make a Right: On the Curious Political Career of North American Philosophy of Science at Mid-Century,” in *Logical Empiricism in North America*, eds., Gary Hardcastle and Alan Richardson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 25-93; Reisch, *How the Cold War Transformed Philosophy of Science*, chaps. 15-17.

<sup>68</sup> Joseph Agassi, “Contemporary Philosophy of Science as Thinly Masked Antidemocratic Apologetics,” in *Physics, Philosophy and the Scientific Community*, eds., K. Gavroglu et al. (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995), 153-170.

<sup>69</sup> Hans Reichenbach, *The Rise of Scientific Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951), 282.

<sup>70</sup> David A. Hollinger, *Science, Jews, and Secular Culture: Studies in Mid-Twentieth Century American Intellectual History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 157.

<sup>71</sup> My discussion in this section draws on the following works: S. M. Amadae, *Rationalizing Capitalist Democracy: The Cold War Origins of Rational Choice Liberalism* (Chicago and London: University of

attention of scientific and technical experts away from military and strategic concerns, the U.S. Army Air Force and the Douglas Aircraft Company created a technically independent think tank which was RAND. While initially it dealt primarily with technical problems (e.g., calculating the trajectories of the intercontinental ballistic missiles), RAND soon ventured into a comprehensive array of problems and began to supply “scientific” and “objective” public policies professedly free from politics and partisanship. (By the end of the 1950s, economists had become the dominant group at RAND.) The stock in trade, so to speak, of RAND was “systems analysis,” which involves quantitative assessments and the cost-benefit analysis of logistical, organizational, or strategic problems. The first successful systems analysis study was to determine the best configuration of bomber bases. Albert Wohlstetter, a mathematician at RAND, constructed a model *on the assumption* that all overseas American bomber bases were attacked simultaneously by the Soviet Union, leaving the United States completely incapacitated. Naturally, Wohlstetter’s mathematical model spewed out an enormous arms build-up as a solution. At first Wohlstetter’s study got cold-shouldered by the military, because his almost paranoid assumption was contrary to all intelligence available then (and since). But eventually his scenario made its way into the policy-making community, importantly through its claim to scientific objectivity, effecting “a mind-boggling peace-time arms build up that outstripped the Soviet’s armament manufacture pace by a factor of at least 15 to 1.”<sup>72</sup> Also, Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of Defense under Kennedy who just won the election partly by successfully exploiting the fictitious notion of a “missile gap” suggested by a RAND report, radically restructured the Department of Defense using

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Chicago Press, 2003), chap. 1; Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Fred M. Kaplan, *The Wizards of Armageddon* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983).

<sup>72</sup> Amadae, *Rationalizing Capitalist Democracy*, 46.

management technologies developed in RAND. Undertaken in accordance with the methodology known as the “Planning-Programming-Budgeting System” (PPBS), the crux of this restructuring was to link strategic matters with budget concerns—a bundle which would then be handled singly by McNamara who had no military experience. The DOD restructuring, in other words, produced a highly centralized decision-making structure that alienated internal discussion over policies, let alone public debate.

For our purposes, it is important to recognize that “scientific” management technologies did not simply justify and facilitate elite-driven technocracy. Those technologies also embodied and promoted a particular disposition toward ordinary people. In order to interrogate this matter, we need to approach science, as Andrew Pickering suggests, as a “zone of encounter between human and nonhuman agency—a place of struggle where human agency in its many guises (the scale and social relations of human actors, their interest and disciplined practices, and so on) is reciprocally reconfigured in relation to the contours and powers of nonhuman agencies like machines, instruments, and experimental set-ups.” In other words, we need to shift our attention from a “history of ideas” that “understand[s] scientific ideas as evolving under its own logic” to a “*history of agency*: a history of social agents in relation to the becoming of material agents.”<sup>73</sup> This shift in perspective enables us to see an aspect of Cold War science that has not received sufficient attention: World War II and the Cold War brought into prominence a mechanical mode of subjectivity conducive to management and control. And the sciences recruited and mobilized for military

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<sup>73</sup> Andrew Pickering, “The History of Economics and the History of Agency,” in *The State of the History of Economics*, ed. James Henderson (London: Routledge, 1997), 6-7; emphasis in original.

purposes systematically and on a massive scale like never before—“war sciences”—played a crucial role in the construction of that subjectivity.<sup>74</sup>

At the outset, war sciences were primarily concerned with optimization of the hardware such as radar in antisubmarine or antiaircraft warfare. The distinct challenge that war sciences faced was the need to translate heterogeneous agglomerations of actors, machines, and messages to a homogeneous language that can facilitate more effective surveillance and control.<sup>75</sup> This explains why war sciences relied heavily on statistics (which converts various factors into numerically comparable categories). But more fundamentally, war sciences needed something like a new ontology of the enemy to even begin to perform their task. After all, what is the use of sophisticated statistics if one cannot settle the unit of measurement? Thus created, not on battlefield but in the laboratories, this enemy was something unique. As Peter Galison writes, it was neither the racialized enemy (e.g., opponents dehumanized as a beast or vermin) nor the anonymous enemy (e.g., individuals on enemy soil as the remote and invisible target of air raid). It was, instead, a “mechanized Enemy Other” that “was neither invisible nor irrational ... [but] at home in the world of strategy, tactics, and maneuver, all the while thoroughly inaccessible to us, separated by a gulf of distance, speed, and metal.”<sup>76</sup>

Norbert Wiener, a physicist who was involved in the improvement of antiaircraft technologies during World War II, provides an illuminating vision of this new ontology. Wiener’s idea was to use electronic networks to predict in advance the

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<sup>74</sup> For a good overview of the relationship between scientists and the military during World War II, see Andrew Pickering, “Cyborg History and the World War II Regime,” *Perspectives on Science* 3 (1995): 1-45.

<sup>75</sup> In this respect, war sciences bear resemblance to Taylorism. M. Fortun and S. S. Schweber, “Scientists and the Legacy of World War II: The Case of Operations Research,” *Social Studies of Science* 23(4) (1993): 595-642, esp. 620-625. Suggestively, Robert McNamara was an executive of the Ford Motor Company before he became Secretary of Defense.

<sup>76</sup> Peter Galison, “The Ontology of the Enemy: Norbert Wiener and the Cybernetic Vision,” *Critical Inquiry* 21(1) (1994), 231, 233.

position of an attacking plane, and use that knowledge to direct an antiaircraft gun. Given that the most advanced technology of tracing an airplane then available was the gunner's vision and concentration, it is no surprise that the military took interest in Wiener's proposal. Of course, the great difficulty of mechanically tracing an aircraft came from the fact that the "target" was not entirely mechanical. Undoubtedly the enemy pilot maneuvered the bombers to evade artillery fire and, in doing so, generated irregularities that could not be easily calculated. So as he tried to make the actual device that would implement his ideas in the summer of 1941, Wiener was in dire need of finding a way to formalize the behavior of the enemy pilot. As Wiener later remarked, because it was impossible to "eliminate the human element as far as it shows itself in enemy behavior ... in order to obtain as complete a mathematical treatment as possible of the over-all control problem, it [was] necessary to assimilate the different parts of the system to a single basis, either human or mechanical. Since our understanding of the mechanical elements of gun pointing appeared to us to be far ahead of our psychological understanding, we chose to try to find a mechanical analogue of the gun pointer and the airplane pilot."<sup>77</sup> And this was the result of that assimilation:

We realized that the "randomness" or irregularity of an airplane's path is introduced by the pilot; that in attempting to force his dynamic craft to execute a useful manoeuvre, such as straight-line flight or 180 degree turn, the pilot behaves like a servo-mechanism, attempting to overcome the intrinsic lag due to the dynamics of his plane as a physical system, in response to a stimulus which increases in intensity with the degree to which he has failed to accomplish his task. A further factor of importance was that the pilot's kinaesthetic reaction to the motion of the plane is quite different from that which his other senses would normally lead him to expect, so that for precision flying, he must disassociate his kinaesthetic from his visual sense.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 240.

<sup>78</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 236.



This description tells us a great deal about the ontology of the mechanized Enemy Other. First of all, this ontology is behaviorist in the basic sense that the behavior of the Other is all that counts; what he may think or intend is unknowable and utterly irrelevant.<sup>79</sup> Just like we would do with other servomechanisms such as guided missiles, we deduce the purpose of the enemy pilot from his past behavior (he has been trying to shoot down our airplanes, so that is his purpose), and predict his future behavior the same way. Second, the pilot is perceived as a homeostatic mechanism that adjusts itself in response to changes in the environment through its feedback function. In other words, a person is deterministically ensconced within the environment. He can change only himself, not the environment. Lastly, Wiener's experiment is premised on a highly disciplined subject. What he observed was a situation in which the pilot had to dissociate his maneuvering from his normal senses. Moreover, the pilot is constantly disciplined by the plane (a stimulus to the pilot's body increases in intensity with the degree to which he failed to meet the plane's mechanical demands—this is called “inverse feedback”). It is under such an extraordinary condition that a person's behavior becomes machine-like and thus mechanically predictable.

It is not impossible to see this conception of a person could serve some military purposes. (Wiener's project ultimately failed. Although he was able to predict the position of the attacking plane with remarkable precision, he could do so only two seconds in advance—too short a time to adjust the antiaircraft gun.) But Wiener

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<sup>79</sup> It is to be noted that the “behaviorist” approach is different from “behavioralism” that I will examine in the next chapter. Unlike behaviorists, behaviorists do not limit the scope of their study to the overt behavior. Behaviorists do not treat the motivational component of human behavior as the “black-box,” but take into account people's attitudes, beliefs, expectations, and motivations. This aspect of behavioralism is illustrated by their frequent use of questionnaires.

insisted that his servomechanical theory, which he later calls “cybernetics,”<sup>80</sup> be applied to human nature in general, arguing that “men ... are like machines from the *scientific* standpoint.”<sup>81</sup> Indeed, the idea that both humans and nonhumans are alike goal-oriented feedback mechanisms capable of learning and adjusting profoundly influenced the postwar development of the natural as well as social sciences. One of the major venues for the diffusion of cybernetics was a series of conferences sponsored by the Josiah Macy, Jr., Foundation between 1942 and 1952. Participants in this conference series included not just natural scientists but such eminent social scientists as Kurt Lewin, Gregory Bateson, Margaret Mead, and Karl Deutsch, many of whom were inspired to apply the feedback concept to societal and managerial problems.<sup>82</sup> As Warren McCulloch stated in a memorandum distributed in advance of the tenth conference and included as an appendix in the proceedings, “Norbert Wiener and his friends ... had shown the applicability of the notions of inverse feedback to all problems of regulation, homeostasis, and goal-directed activity from steam engines to human societies.”<sup>83</sup> It is also to be noted that John von Neumann and Oscar Morgenstern participated in the early Macy cybernetics meetings shortly before they coauthored *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*, which became a foundational text of game theory at RAND and beyond. With this wide-ranging impact of cybernetics in mind, Pickering went so far as to suggest that feedback thought in

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<sup>80</sup> Norbert Wiener, *Cybernetics: Or, Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1961).

<sup>81</sup> Arturo Rosenblueth and Norbert Wiener, “Purposeful and Non-purposeful Behavior,” *Philosophy of Science* 17(4) (1950), 326, emphasis added.

<sup>82</sup> George P. Richardson, *Feedback Thought in Social Science and Systems Theory* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 95-96.

<sup>83</sup> Warren S. McCulloch, “Summary of the Points of Agreement Reached in the Previous Nine Conferences on Cybernetics,” in *Cybernetics: Circular Causal and Feedback Mechanisms in Biological and Social Systems: Transactions of the Tenth Conference*, ed. Heinz von Foerster (New York: Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation, 1953), 70. Examples of feedback phenomena mentioned include, among others, cardiac flutter and fibrillation, the control functions of the cerebellum, various pathologies of the nervous system, the polling of public opinion, fluctuations of markets, and arms races. McCulloch also mentioned cultural anthropologists who study rules with respect to kinship, forms of address, praise, blame, etc. as negative feedback mechanisms serving to stabilize society. *Ibid.*, 71-75.

general and cybernetics in particular “took computer-controlled gun control and layered it in an ontologically indiscriminate fashion across the academic disciplinary board ... [C]ybernetics ... turn[ed] itself into a universal metaphysics, a Theory of Everything.”<sup>84</sup>

In the next chapter, I will examine theoretical implications of applying the Wienerian ontology to democratic politics in more detail by analyzing how it figures in influential theories of democracy such as behavioralism and rational choice theory. Here it suffices to note that, within the framework of war sciences, the idea of insulated technocracy went hand in hand with the mechanistic, objectified view of a person whose intentions are disregarded and whose activities can and should be disciplined to fulfill predetermined purposes. In that respect, the central mechanism that shaped the practice of democratic politics during the Cold War was not based solely on the logic of exclusion as embodied in technocracy. Rather, it was double-sided in that it entailed both exclusion *and* discipline.

Two examples serve to illustrate this point. One is the trajectory of the Johnson administration’s war on poverty initiative.<sup>85</sup> Initially, the architects of the war on poverty placed great emphasis on transforming local institutions and getting the poor involved in those institutions, believing that political alienation is one of the central factors that perpetuates the vicious cycle of poverty. This emphasis is reflected in the centrality of the Community Action Programs (CAPs) to the initial plan, which were intended to address the problem of poverty through coordination between locally organized nonprofit community corporations and the federal government. Influential

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<sup>84</sup> Pickering, “Cyborg History,” 31.

<sup>85</sup> My discussion in this section draws on David Jardini’s excellent study. David R. Jardini, “Out of the Blue Yonder: The Transfer of Systems Thinking from the Pentagon to the Great Society, 1961-1965,” in *Systems, Experts, and Computers: The Systems Approach in Management and Engineering, World War II and After*, eds., Agatha C. Hughes and Thomas P. Hughes (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 311-357.

figures such as David Hackett, Richard Boone, and Frederick Hayes advocated “maximum feasible participation” of the poor in community programs as a way of mobilizing and empowering them as autonomous political agents, instead of treating them as passive recipients. While the phrase “maximum feasible participation” managed to find its way to the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, its implementation quickly proved to be “too chaotic” for the taste of the systems analysts at the Pentagon, the economists at the Bureau of Budget, and the White House. This growing disillusionment in Washington resulted in the transformation of the entire war on poverty program in accordance with the PPBS. For example, Sargent Shriver who headed the Office of the Economic Opportunity presiding over the war on poverty—and who had never been sympathetic to the CAPs—set out to eliminate participatory elements from his agency. In doing so, Shriver turned to his close friend for advice: Robert McNamara. McNamara, as noted, was not particularly fond of a decentralized decision-making structure and advised Shriver to establish a centralized system like the one he was running at the Pentagon. Taking McNamara’s advice, Shriver established a program analysis office reporting directly to him and hired RAND analyst Joseph Kershaw as assistant director. And over the summer of 1965, Henry Rowen, one of McNamara’s “Whiz Kids” and later president of RAND, drew a more comprehensive plan for implementing the PPBS in the civilian agencies of the federal government. In August 1965, President Johnson endorsed the plan.

The other case is the changing reaction to urban riots in the 1960s. Even as the Johnson administration was waging one war against Communism abroad and another on poverty at home, America did not seem anywhere near peace. In the late 1960s, a series of riots by African Americans broke out in different parts of the country—in Watts (1965), Newark (1967), and Detroit (1967). After a particularly violent incident in Detroit, Johnson established the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders,

headed by Illinois Governor Otto Kerner, assigning it to determine the cause of rebellion and to find possible remedies. Rejecting the conservatives' charge that militant agitators were behind the riots, the Kerner commission's report highlighted, in the words of Commission co-chair John Lindsay, a "reservoir of grievances" of the "Negro community" in the ghettos.<sup>86</sup> Reflecting the viewpoint of consensus-oriented Cold War liberalism, the report suggested a piecemeal approach to the problem. Its suggestions—more low-income housing program, more urban renewal projects, jobs for the unemployed, improved police-community relations—sounded reasonable but did not really depart from the policies that the administration was already pursuing. At a time when conservatives were mounting a highly effective attack on the war on poverty, especially the CAPs, blaming it for worsening urban violence by politicizing the poor, the Johnson administration needed something punchier. Also, the Kerner report failed to address perhaps the most puzzling aspect of the riots: the riots erupted not just in ghettos but more frequently in economically favorable places, being Watts the most conspicuous example. In need of more sophisticated, and probably more immediately practical, theories about civil unrest, law enforcement authorities turned to those with established credentials: military think tanks involved in the development of counterinsurgency strategies in Vietnam, such as the Institute for Defense Analysis and, again, RAND.

Around the mid-1960s, RAND was undergoing a small paradigm shift in their approach to counterinsurgency. While much of counterinsurgency studies in the early 1960s had focused on winning the "hearts and minds" of the people, RAND analysts began to seriously doubt the effectiveness of such a strategy and turned their attention

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<sup>86</sup> Quoted in Tracy Tullis, *A Vietnam at Home: Policing the Ghettos in the Counterinsurgency Era* (Ph.D. Diss., New York University, 1999), 8.

to “coercive counterinsurgency.”<sup>87</sup> A RAND analyst named Guy Pauker, for example, conveyed this sentiment in his 1967 paper. Reflecting on “the history of nationalist movements in the Third World,” Pauker argued that “there is a crucial point at which reforms are no longer enough and a revolutionary situation has arisen,” and suggested that racial tensions in the United States had reached just such a point.<sup>88</sup> Such a pessimistic assessment did not seem entirely unwarranted at the time. But the question was: if reform is not going to work, what is the alternative? Two counterinsurgency specialists at RAND, Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf, Jr., worked on this question in a series of papers between 1966 and 1970. They criticized the “hearts-and-minds view” for focusing too much on the “demand side” (e.g., people’s sympathies for insurgents), and proposed to pay attention to the “supply side” which involves “factors within the insurgent organization which influence its capabilities and growth” (e.g., resources that insurgents can extract from the local population). Positing as their “fundamental assumption” that the population behaves “rationally” (i.e., behaves according to the cost-benefit analysis) and using mathematical models and graphs, Leites and Wolf drew the conclusion that insurgencies can be controlled most effectively by increasing the cost of instigating or supporting them.<sup>89</sup>

Setting aside the validity of their model in the war context (which is at least debatable given the consequences of the escalation of violence in Vietnam), what concerns us here is Leites’s and Wolf’s claim that their theory can be applied directly to civilian politics or, as they put it, to “contemporary urban disorders and campus rebellions in the more developed countries.”<sup>90</sup> Specifically challenging the analysis of

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<sup>87</sup> On the shift from the “hearts-and-minds” approach to “coercive counterinsurgency,” see Ron Robin, *The Making of the Cold War Enemy: Culture and Politics in the Military-Intellectual Complex* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), chap. 9.

<sup>88</sup> Quoted in Tullis, *A Vietnam at Home*, 113-114.

<sup>89</sup> Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf, Jr., *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts*, RAND Report R-462-ARPA, 1970), available at: <http://www.rand.org/pubs/reports/2006/R0462.pdf>, 28-40.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

the Kerner report, Leites and Wolf argued that the socioeconomic environment was not a determining factor of the riots. “From an economic standpoint, Watts in 1965 was probably among the most favorably situated of the black communities in the U.S. When one looks at the Detroit riots of 1967, it turns out that incomes of rioters were significantly higher than those of non-rioters ... Similarly, campus rebellions have often been most severe in those academic centers (for example, Berkeley, Columbia, Wisconsin, Cornell, Harvard, and Swarthmore) where living and learning conditions were among the best.”<sup>91</sup> Thus, instead of continuing the reform as the Kerner report had suggested, Leites’s and Wolf’s study asserted that the government would do a lot better (in terms of efficiency) by simply raising the cost of rebellion: collecting intelligence on potential threats, isolating rioters from the general population, and selectively “inflicting damage” on troublemakers.<sup>92</sup> Coercive counterinsurgency advocated by Leites and Wolf would heavily influence America’s third world policy and set the tone for its domestic policies toward civil unrest.<sup>93</sup>

In the late 1960s, civil violence was indeed reaching an unprecedented level and posed a genuine challenge to policymakers. But the decline of the structural approach exemplified by the Kerner report and the rise of RAND-style coercive tactics imported from war zones are indicative of the rapidly shrinking room for the deepening of democratic politics, opened up for a brief period of time. Rebellious actions were no longer viewed as the expression of a “reservoir of grievances” but as “crimes” and, worse, “insurgencies” to be controlled and suppressed. More fundamentally, this tale makes clear that there is a serious tension between the Cold War variant of “scientific management” and democratic politics, not simply because

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 17-18.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 90-131.

<sup>93</sup> On the application of counterinsurgency tactics to civil unrest, especially to the African American community, see Tullis, *A Vietnam at Home*, chaps. 3-4.

scientific management favors a centralized decision-making process but also because it is predicated on the ontology that looks upon its object—citizens in this case—as an enemy to combat, not as a fellow to work with.

### **Conclusion: The Emergence of Instrumental Democracy**

Today, we barely pause before equating democracy with a set of attributes such as voters, elections, or competing parties. What goes unnoticed is the extent to which the substance of democracy beneath those formal attributes was structured by historical conditions associated with the Cold War. In this chapter, I have sought to unearth those conditions in order to subject some of those substantive issues to critical scrutiny. Is individual preference the only viable foundation of democracy? Do democracy and capitalism constitute a seamless symbiosis? Is democratic politics to be subordinated to the knowledge and techniques of “experts”?

To address these questions, we need to shift our mode of investigation and examine how individual pieces identified thus far form a coherent whole. I take up this task in the next chapter by analyzing behavioralism and rational choice theory as symptomatic articulations of Cold War imperatives. In anticipation of that discussion, let us consider an early inspiration for those theories: Joseph Schumpeter’s “procedural” theory of democracy. In *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* published in 1942, Schumpeter challenged what he calls the “classical doctrine of democracy” and provided an alternative concept of democracy. He starts out denouncing the concept of the common good and the “will of the people” as the foundation of democracy. The classical doctrine, Schumpeter claims, mistakenly presupposes that “there exists a Common Good” that is “always simple to define and which every normal person can be made to see by means of rational argument.” This presupposition implies “definite answers to all questions so that every social fact and



every measure taken or to be taken can unequivocally be classed as “good” or “bad.””<sup>94</sup> Add to this the belief that “there is also a Common Will of the people (= will of all reasonable individuals) ... that is exactly coterminous with the common good or interest or welfare or happiness,” and we have a full-fledged picture of totalitarianism where “[t]he only thing, barring stupidity and sinister interests, that can possibly bring in disagreement and account for the presence of an opposition is a difference of opinion as to the speed with which the goal, itself common to nearly all, is to be approached.”<sup>94</sup>

Schumpeter’s hugely influential rendering of the classical theory of democracy provides a glimpse into the dimension of democracy lost in the Cold War.<sup>95</sup> By equating the will of the people with the aggregation of private individuals’ predetermined preferences, Schumpeter completely ignores the *dynamic* and *political* nature of the formation of the popular will, which is central to the classical theory of democracy. Rousseau, a major spokesperson of the classical doctrine, makes this clear in his distinction between “the will of all” that is “no more than a sum of particular wills” and “the general will” that “considers only the common good.” Rousseau’s claim that the general will considers “only” the common good might have easily invoked an image of totalitarianism in the minds steeped in Cold War culture, such as Schumpeter’s. What went unnoticed, however, is the fact that Rousseau explicitly rejects any permanent homogenization of individual differences. As he states in book II, chapter 3 of the *Social Contract*, “[i]f there were no different interests, the common

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<sup>94</sup> Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (New York: Harper, 1942), 250.

<sup>95</sup> Schumpeter’s critique provoked impassioned responses. John Plamenatz scathingly remarked that Schumpeter’s attack on “what [Schumpeter] called “the classical theory of democracy ... is ignorant and inept.” Schumpeter’s theory is “worth discussing,” Plamenatz fumed, “only because it has been taken seriously ... I suspect that not a few American political scientists, immersed in their studies of political behaviour in the largest of the Western democracies, gladly took [Schumpeter’s] word for it that the theories of the past, which they were too busy to read, were so unrealistic as not to be worth reading.” John P. Plamenatz, *Democracy and Illusion* (London: Longman, 1973), 96, 99. See also Carole Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), chaps. 1-2.

interest would be barely felt, as it would encounter no obstacle; all would go on of its own accord, and politics would cease to be an art.”<sup>96</sup> The “art of politics” is nothing but the heart of Rousseau’s democratic theory; and it is most distinctively a dynamic process. Rousseau argues that the “*act of association*” creates “a corporate and collective body” in place of private interests and that this collective body “receive[s] from this *act* its unity, its common identity, its life, and its will.”<sup>97</sup> Based on this observation, Rousseau offers another suggestive distinction: “This public person ... is called ... *State* when passive, [and] *Sovereign* when active.”<sup>98</sup>

According to Rousseau’s last distinction, one may understand Schumpeter’s theory as an attempt to replace the active state of democracy with the passive one. Reflecting the pessimistic view of human nature and the suspicion toward the masses that pervaded Cold War political imagination, Schumpeter contends that “groups” including professional politicians, exponents of an economic interest, or political activists “are able to fashion, and within very wide limits, even to create the will of the people.” The popular will that the classical doctrine elevates as the foundation of democracy is in actuality “manufactured” in a manner “analogous to the ways of commercial advertising.”<sup>99</sup> Given this reality, Schumpeter proposes that we diminish the classical doctrine’s emphasis on “the people” and, instead, “make the deciding of issues by the electorate secondary to the election of the men who are to do the deciding.” Upon this shift in perspective, democracy is redefined as a “method” or an “institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals

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<sup>96</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and Discourses*, trans. G. D. H. Cole (London: Everyman Library, 1993), 203.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 192, emphasis added.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 192-193.

<sup>99</sup> Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, 263.

acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote."<sup>100</sup>

As an early articulation of instrumental democracy, Schumpeter's theory does not simply tilt the balance between Rousseau's Sovereign and State towards the latter. Rather, it fundamentally redefines the relationship between Sovereign and State from an intricate balance to be worked out through the "art of politics" to an inherent conflict that commands the repression of one for the sake of the other. And predictably, that repression always works in favor of State. As I discuss in the next chapter, both behavioralism and rational choice theory illustrate mechanisms of this repression in detail. But one finds the most general and glaring statement of the tension between democracy as a *modus operandi* and democracy as a form of life in Samuel Huntington's discussion of the "democratic excess." In a 1975 study sponsored by the Trilateral Commission, entitled *The Crisis of Democracy*, Huntington somberly wrote about the dim future of democracy. He considers "contextual challenges" such as the aggressive behavior of the Soviet Union and the oil price increases and "social trends" including the increasing power of populist movements and critical intellectuals as a possible threat.<sup>101</sup> But Huntington is worried about a more fundamental problem that stems from the very nature of democracy. "[P]erhaps most seriously, there are the *intrinsic challenges* to the viability of democratic government which grow directly out of the functioning of democracy. Democratic government ... function[s] so as to give rise to forces and tendencies which, if unchecked by some outside agency, will eventually lead to the undermining of democracy ... The more democratic a system is, indeed, the more likely it is to be endangered by intrinsic threats" (7-8). By this intrinsic challenge, Huntington means, primarily, increasing popular demands that

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 269.

<sup>101</sup> Michel Crozier, Samuel P. Huntington, and Joji Watanuki, *The Crisis of Democracy* (New York: New York University Press, 1975), 4-7. Subsequent references cited parenthetically.

presumably exceed the capacity of the government. So like Schumpeter, Huntington, too, thinks that the “vitality of democracy” fundamentally conflicts with the “governability of democracy,” or more precisely, that the former threatens the latter. “[S]ome of the problems of governance in the United States today stem from an excess of democracy.” To restore balance between “vitality and governability in the democratic government,” Huntington calls for a “greater degree of moderation in democracy” (113).

“[T]he effective operation of a democratic political system usually requires some measure of apathy and noninvolvement on the part of some individuals and groups. In the past, every democratic society has had a marginal population, of greater or lesser size, which has not actively participated in politics. In itself, this marginality on the part of some groups is inherently undemocratic, but it has also been one of the factors which has enabled democracy to function effectively. Marginal social groups, as in the case of the blacks, are now becoming full participants in the political system. Yet the danger of overloading the political system with demands which extend its functions and undermine its authority still remains. Less marginality on the part of some groups thus needs to be replaced by more self-restraint on the part of all groups” (114).

Huntington, like everyone else writing in the early 1970s, did not know that the global diffusion of democracy—which Huntington himself later famously labels the “Third Wave”—was about to begin in just a few years. But his prescriptions in this passage would dictate, almost uncannily, the development of democracy in the following decades. As we saw in the Introduction, both new and old democracies suffer from political apathy, withdrawal, and disillusionment—signs of democratic disaffection—despite the seeming triumph of democracy in the late twentieth century. One is tempted to say that *lack* of democratic vitality is what threatens the governability of democracy today. Indeed, next report to the Trilateral Commission, written twenty five

years later, is titled *Disaffected Democracies* and begins with the following question: “why, in some of the world’s oldest democracies, in an era in which democracy as a form of government has triumphed worldwide, is public confidence in leaders and the institutions of democratic governance at or near an all-time low?”<sup>102</sup> My argument, which I began to make in this chapter and will unfold in the following chapters, is that democratic disaffection is closely related to the instrumentalization democracy underwent in the postwar era, the nature of which is implied in Huntington’s remarks.

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<sup>102</sup> Susan J. Pharr and Robert D. Putnam, *Disaffected Democracies: What’s Troubling the Trilateral Countries* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), xv.

## CHAPTER 3

### **The Logics of Instrumental Democracy: Scientific Theories of Democracy**

“Consistent as well as humane thought will be aware of the hateful irony of a philosophy which is indifferent to the conditions that determine the occurrence of reason while it asserts the ultimacy and universality of reason.”

--John Dewey (1927)<sup>1</sup>

“Any theory which denies a place to uncongenial modes of thinking and feeling, despite the fact that such modes have always existed and are even now threatening to reach epidemic proportions, ignores them at its peril.”

--Norman Jacobson (1964)<sup>2</sup>

In the previous chapter, I examined the historical emergence of instrumental democracy as an assemblage of Cold War imperatives and began to explore its theoretical implications by comparing Schumpeter’s theory of democracy to Rousseau’s. In this chapter, I want to investigate logics of instrumental democracy more closely by analyzing the vision of democracy formulated by behavioralism and rational choice theory in political science. Scholarly discourse is always symptomatic of the historical context in which it is produced, and the postwar era is no exception. Without taking into account the Cold War context, one may be left to wonder, for instance, why the state concept was almost banished from the discussion of American democracy at a very time when the American state was becoming more powerful than

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<sup>1</sup> John Dewey, *The Later Works, 1925-1953, vol. 1* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1981-1990), 99.

<sup>2</sup> Norman Jacobson, “Political Science and Political Education,” *American Political Science Review* 57(3) (1963), 561.

ever,<sup>3</sup> or why the existence of the common good was denied when anti-Communism prevailed as the ultimate American cause. In particular, behavioralism and rational choice theory provide two distinct and yet equally clear articulations of instrumental democracy. Behavioralism elevates pluralism from a dilemma to an ideal of democracy, codifying the democracy constructed, and constricted, by anti-totalitarianism. Rational choice theory shows that if citizens are completely reduced to rational individuals whose sole motivation is to maximize benefit and minimize cost and democracy to a mere instrument of aggregating the preferences of those individuals, there is no reason for them to participate in politics at all.

Of course, I am not suggesting that behavioralism and rational choice theory are useless as a research tool. Like many other technologies, their historical origins do not necessarily determine the utility of behavioralism and rational choice theory as methods. Assessing their explanatory power and heuristic value is an important matter, but not pursued here.<sup>4</sup> Instead, I approach behavioralism and rational choice theory as normative visions or narratives of democracy premised upon Cold War imperatives. Because behavioralism and rational choice theory construct a vision of democracy somewhat distanced from empirical reality, they provide a more coherent and clearer

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<sup>3</sup> Terence Ball, "American Political Science in Its Postwar Political Context," in *Discipline and History: Political Science in the United States*, eds. James Farr and Raymond Seidelman (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 218.

<sup>4</sup> There has been a heated debate surrounding behavioralism and rational choice theory as a method of political inquiry. For a critique of the scientific study of politics in general, see Charles Taylor, *Philosophy and the Human Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Clarke E. Cochran, "The Politics of Interest: Philosophy and the Limitations of the Science of Politics," *American Journal of Political Science* 17(4) (1973): 745-766; and essays in *Essays on the Scientific Study of Politics*, ed. Herbert J. Storing (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1962). For a critique of behavioralism, see Christian Bay, "Politics and Pseudopolitics: A Critical Evaluation of Some Behavioral Literature," *American Political Science Review* 59(1) (1959): 39-51; Charles Allan McCoy and John Playford, eds., *Apolitical Politics: A Critique of Behavioralism* (New York: Crowell, 1967); Marvin Surkin and Alan Wolfe eds., *An End to Political Science: The Caucus Papers* (New York: Basic Books, 1970). For a critique of rational choice theory, see Kirsten Renwick Monroe ed., *The Economic Approach to Politics: A Critical Reassessment of the Theory of Rational Action* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991); Donald P. Green and Ian Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

articulation of instrumental democracy than what could be extracted from its historical origins in the previous chapter. This shift in focus reveals commonalities between behavioralism and rational choice theory that are otherwise quite different and often contending research programs.<sup>5</sup> Together, behavioralism and rational choice theory redefine democracy in accordance with instrumental democracy. They posit individuals (or groups as a collection of individuals) as the fundamental basis of democracy. Inspired by Schumpeter's ideas, behavioralism and rational choice theory reduce the common good to a sum of *completed* and *unchallengeable* individual preferences, dismissing as totalitarian Rousseau's insight that the common good must be formed and reformed through people's experience of coming and acting together as a (temporary) collective body. In stark contrast to theories in prior decades, behavioralism and rational choice theory discount the significance of political participation and refuse to interrogate people's unwillingness to go beyond the narrow confines of their private domain. In fact, they *legitimize* political apathy, either as a means to naturally restrain the irrational force of the masses or as the natural outcome of individuals' rational calculation. As behavioralism and rational choice theory envision it, democracy is a self-regulating mechanism that works out a compromise between expressed individual interests on its own largely separated from people's actual contributions.

This is an extremely dubious way of theorizing democracy, insofar as it interrogates neither the process through which specific interests are formed and come to be expressed nor the ways in which those interests are "processed" in the

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<sup>5</sup> Practitioners of rational choice theory often describe their movement as a reaction against insufficiently scientific behavioralism. See William Riker, "The Ferment of the 1950s and the Development of Rational Choice Theory," in *Contemporary Empirical Political Theory*, ed. Kristen Renwick Monroe (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 191-201. For a critique of rational choice theory from the behaviorist point of view, see Green and Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory*.



mechanism called democracy. As I will demonstrate, what behavioralism and rational choice theory effectively do is to translate normative and historically contingent assumptions deeply embedded in Cold War America into a “scientific”—value-neutral and transhistorical—model of democracy. This may be a manifestation of American social sciences’ enduring desire to make their study more scientific, which was felt more acutely in the postwar period.<sup>6</sup> But by failing to recognize historical conditions and forces that gave rise to their premises, behavioralism and rational choice theory participate in a form of collective amnesia that serves to reinforce instrumental democracy. While characteristically championing reason as the end of nature and the basis of science, John Dewey once remarked that reason is not a quality given spontaneously or naturally but a product of deliberate arts of politics and education. This is why, in the passage I cited as one of this chapter’s epigraphs, Dewey warns against the “hateful irony of a philosophy which is indifferent to the conditions that determine the occurrence of reason while it asserts the ultimacy and universality of reason.” Sadly, his warning went unheard; the scientific theories of democracy in the postwar years would be exposed to precisely that irony.

This chapter is divided into four parts. First, I briefly sketch the history of American political science up until World War II. American political science emerged with a germ of paradox due to its double-sided aspiration to be value-free science and to serve the democratic ideal at once. Second, I examine how behavioralism conceptualizes democracy as a self-regulating mechanism that alienates people by

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<sup>6</sup> After World War II, there was real pressure on social scientists to demonstrate their scientific standing, especially regarding the entry of the social sciences into what would ultimately become the National Science Foundation (NSF). See Samuel Z. Klausner, “The Bid to Nationalize American Social Science,” in *The Nationalization of the Social Sciences*, eds., Samuel Z. Klausner and Victor M. Lidz (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 3-39. At the request of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), sociologist Talcott Parsons drafted (though never actually used for the intended purpose) a paper stressing the scientific nature of the social sciences that would become crucial to the social scientists’ self-image. Talcott Parsons, “Science Legislation and the Social Sciences,” *Political Science Quarterly* 62(2) (1947): 241-249.

circumscribing the role of their contributions. Third, I interrogate how rational choice theory redefines democracy in terms of the narrow concept of rationality, and in doing so, produces an impoverished vision of democracy unable to elicit people's support. Lastly, I broaden the scope of my discussion and examine how instrumental democracy influenced not only the concept of democracy but also its practice by becoming part of modernization theory.

### **Between Science and Democracy: A Dilemma of American Political Science**

American political science was born, as it were, with a double allegiance to scientific neutrality and the democratic ideal.<sup>7</sup> On the one hand, a group of reform-minded individuals protested against religious doctrines and moral philosophy they deemed dogmatic and metaphysical, and turned to science, looking for the most advanced knowledge as well as the foundation of their intellectual and cultural authority.<sup>8</sup> Especially after the publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859), scientific research gained enormous prestige over theology, and became the

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<sup>7</sup> There is a vast literature on the development of American political science. Some of the notable works include: Bernard Crick, *The American Science of Politics: Its Origins and Conditions* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1959); Albert Somit and Joseph Tanenhaus, *The Development of American Political Science: From Burgess to Behavioralism* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967); Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); John G. Gunnell, *Imagining the American Polity* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004); David Ricci, *The Tragedy of American Political Science: Politics, Scholarship, and Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984); Raymond Seidelman, with the assistance of Edward J. Harpham, *Disenchanted Realists: Political Science and the American Crisis, 1884-1984* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1985); James Farr, "The History of Political Science," *American Journal of Political Science* 32 (1988): 1175-1195; Rogers M. Smith, "Still Blowing in the Wind: The American Quest for a Democratic, Scientific Political Science," *Dædalus; American Academic Culture in Transformation: Fifty Years, Four Disciplines* 126(1) (1997): 253-287; Farr and Seidelman, *Discipline and History*.

<sup>8</sup> For the conflict between science and religion in this period, see David D. Hall, "The Victorian Connection," in *Victorian America*, ed. Daniel Walker Howe (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976), 81-94; Frank M. Turner, *Between Science and Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974); idem., "The Victorian Conflict between Science and Religion: A Professional Dimension," *Isis* 69 (3) (1978): 356-376.

basis of university reform after the Civil War. Both academically and institutionally prominent post-Civil War intellectuals—Charles W. Eliot at Harvard, Andrew D. White at Cornell, Daniel C. Gilman at Johns Hopkins, William Graham Sumner at Yale, and John W. Burgess at Columbia—were captivated by the ideal of science that promised to reveal fundamental laws of nature and society.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, these self-avowed scientists did not want to abandon the traditional mission of universities that had been performed by moral philosophy in the pre-Civil War era, namely, promoting good citizenship.<sup>10</sup> When he accepted the Presidency of Cornell and introduced “History, Political and Social Sciences” as one of the six departments in 1868, White proclaimed political science as an essential component of the education of those who would “rise to positions of trust in public service.”<sup>11</sup> Likewise, Burgess said that the Columbia School of Political Science (the first graduate program of political science in the United States) he founded at 1880 was “designed to prepare young men for all the branches of public service.”<sup>12</sup> While the emphasis was clearly on the training of civil servants, the expectation was that expanding university education would help enlighten the American public in general.<sup>13</sup>

While political scientists were, and are, never quite attentive to the difficulties involved in reconciling these two vocational purposes, there is clearly a tension, if not

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<sup>9</sup> The meaning of the term “science” was still vague in the late nineteenth century. Some meant by the word science desirable scholarly dispositions such as calmness and impartiality, others increased attention to history, still others natural science devoted to discovering universal laws of politics. Somit and Tanenhaus, *Development of American Political Science*, 76-79. As I discuss in the next section, the very term “science” becomes a site of struggle in the postwar period.

<sup>10</sup> Crick, *American Science of Politics*, 19-36, 73-74.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Mary O. Furner, *Advocacy and Objectivity: A Crisis in the Professionalization of American Social Science, 1865-1905* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1975), 280.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Anna Haddow, *Political Science in American Colleges and Universities, 1636-1900* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1939), 180n30.

<sup>13</sup> As late as 1913, the American Political Science Association (APSA) ranked “train[ing] for citizenship” as the first of the services to be performed by departments of political science, and “prepar[ing] for professions such as law, journalism, teaching, and public service” and “train[ing] experts and to prepare specialists for government positions” as the second and the third, respectively. Charles G. Haines, “Report on Instruction in Political Science in Colleges and Universities,” *American Political Science Review* 8(1) (1914), 264.

a contradiction, within their aspiration. There is simply no logically consistent way to promote values while at the same time staying value-neutral. The tension between science and democracy haunts the subsequent development of political science, and in particular, critically affects many political scientists' conceptualization of democracy in the postwar period.

The pre-World War II development of political science can be told roughly as the rise and fall of state theory. Influenced by the German theory of the state (*Staatslehre*)<sup>14</sup> and by the works of Francis Lieber,<sup>15</sup> and perhaps responding to the deeply felt need for national unity, the first generation of post-Civil War political scientists such as Theodore D. Woolsey (Yale), White (Cornell), Burgess (Columbia), and Herbert Baxter Adams (Johns Hopkins) promoted or at least implicitly embraced the "state" as the central concept of American democracy. The state, upon Lieber's formulation, "has nothing whatsoever to do with the individual" and is distinguished from government that is merely the "institution or contrivance" through which the state acts; rather, the state is viewed as the natural outgrowth of humanity as a social being, in and through which "[man] obtain[s] ... his highest object, namely, that of being fully man." In theorizing the state, Lieber placed great emphasis on its "organic operation." As he put it, the ideal working of the state would have an "organism ... in which thousand distinct parts have their independent action, yet are by the general organism united into one whole, into one living system."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> For the German influence on the American university, see Richard Hofstadter and Walter P. Metzger, *The Development of Academic Freedom* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), chap. 8. See also Jurgen Herbst, *The German Historical School in American Scholarship: A Study in the Transfer of Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1965).

<sup>15</sup> Francis Lieber (1798-1872) was a German émigré scholar who held the first professorship of political science. His contemporaries as well as later historians have recognized Lieber's principal role in producing the first systematic theory of the state, and laying the foundation for the discipline of political science. See Ross, *Origins*, 37-42, 66-69; Gunnell, *Imagining the American Polity*, 57-67. See also James Farr, "Francis Lieber and the Interpretation of American Political Science," *Journal of Politics* 52(4) (1990): 1027-1049.

<sup>16</sup> Francis Lieber, *Manual of Political Ethics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1876), 219, 238, 210, 353.

To later generations, however, the notion that there is an organic community underlying government institutions seemed too metaphysical and insufficiently scientific. Thus the following decades witnessed a decline of state theory—the trend precipitated by World War I that had made Americans reject the German philosophy of the state as the intellectual source of authoritarianism. Increasingly, the organic vision of the state predicated on a sovereign people seemed untenable in the face of mounting evidence that suggests a pluralistic, or just fragmented, society. Intellectuals at the time such as Graham Wallas, A. Lawrence Lowell, Walter Lippmann, and Frank Kent all painted a splintered society driven by self-interested and prejudiced individuals rather than by an informed and responsible public.<sup>17</sup> Perhaps most famously, Lippmann proclaimed that the ideal of the “omnicompetent, sovereign citizen” is a “false” and “unattainable” ideal, because in reality most people do not and could not know “what is happening, why it is happening, what ought to happen” in politics.<sup>18</sup> Lippmann suggested seeing society not as one organic whole but as “all the adjustments between individuals and their things,” and democracy as a set of elections in which individuals merely “support or oppose the individuals who actually govern.”<sup>19</sup>

So by the end of the 1920s, pluralism was the dominant *description* of American democracy. And yet, it was hardly a *normative ideal*. Charles Merriam—a University of Chicago political scientist who was probably the most powerful patron of the scientific study of politics at the time—saw social fragmentation as an ill to be remedied through civic education.<sup>20</sup> But with the eclipse of the concept of the state, it

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<sup>17</sup> Graham Wallas, *Human Nature in Politics* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1962 [1908]); A. Lawrence Lowell, *Public Opinion and Popular Government* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1913); Walter Lippmann, *A Preface to Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1914); Frank R. Kent, *The Great Game of Politics* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1923).

<sup>18</sup> Walter Lippmann, *The Phantom Public* (New York: Hartcourt, Brace, 1925), 39.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 171-172, 62.

<sup>20</sup> While wary of the dangers of indoctrination as it appeared in the USSR, Germany, and Italy, Merriam asserted that similar techniques could be used to promote democracy. The upshot was to teach

was just not all that certain what normative ideal could inspire and motivate individuals into a public.

Nowhere was this uncertainty expressed more vividly than in John Dewey's famed *The Public and Its Problems* (1927). Like many of his contemporaries, Dewey rejected traditional state theory that theorizes the state as the totality with its own will. He replaced the concept of the state with the concept of "the public" that he defined as a distinctive form of association that "may have extensive and enduring consequences which involve others beyond those directly engaged in them." Government, Dewey asserted, is a representation ("external mark") that attends to the interest of the public.<sup>21</sup> What is interesting about Dewey's reformulation of state theory is that he assigned self-consciousness to the public, thereby making it dynamic. A public, Dewey argued, needs to "form itself" and "has to break existing political forms" to do so. Thus viewed, a state is "something to be scrutinized, investigated, searched for. Almost as soon as its form is stabilized, it needs to be re-made."<sup>22</sup> Although he agreed with Lippmann's assessment that the democratic public currently seemed to be "lost" or "bewildered,"<sup>23</sup> Dewey refused to view it as the reason to give up on the ideal of the organized public or the community vital to any meaningful democracy. As he put it, "democracy is not an alternative to other principles of associated life. It is the idea of community life itself."<sup>24</sup> However, despite his passionate call for the "Great Community," Dewey remained vague as to how that ideal could be achieved, except to suggest the "perfecting of the means and ways of communication of meanings so that

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methods of thinking rather than instilling substantive ideas and values determined by political elites. Charles E. Merriam, *The Making of Citizens: A Comparative Study of Methods of Civic Training* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1921); idem., *Civic Education in the United States* (New York: Scribner's, 1939).

<sup>21</sup> John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems* (Athens: Swallow Press, 1927), 27.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 31-32.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 148.

genuinely shared interest in the consequences of interdependent activities may inform desire and effort and thereby direct action” as the “only possible solution.”<sup>25</sup>

Going into World War II, pluralism was still a dilemma of American political science. Lippmann’s and his colleagues’ acceptance of pluralism as an empirical, if brutal, fact of political life was resisted by a number of radical democratic thinkers such as Dewey who held on to the hope that “one day American democracy would see citizens participate actively and openly in dialogue with each other and in pursuit of a common good.”<sup>26</sup> This ambivalence, however, would disappear in a matter of a few years. In postwar America, pluralism came to be glorified as the consummation of the democratic ideal. In the works of prominent scholars such as David Truman and Robert Dahl, pluralism as a *description* of American politics was transformed into a normative *prescription* dictating the way in which the ideal of democracy ought to be realized. Gone was the search for the demos that, with all of its uncertainty, had long defined the vocation of political science.

### **Constricting Democratic Politics: Behavioralism’s Pluralist Heaven**

A prominent practitioner defines behavioralism as “an orientation or a point of view which aims at stating all the phenomena of government in terms of the observed and observable behavior of men.”<sup>27</sup> To its many proponents, this approach could help political scientists agonize less about first principles and pay more attention to the nitty-gritty of real-world politics.<sup>28</sup> This, then, is an important insight. The

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>26</sup> Marc Stears, *Demanding Democracy: American Radicalism in Search of a New Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 115.

<sup>27</sup> David Truman’s words, quoted in Robert A. Dahl, “The Behavioral Approach in Political Science: Epitaph for a Monument to a Successful Protest,” *American Political Science Review* 55(4) (1961), 767. See also David Easton, “The Current Meaning of Behavioralism,” in *The Limits of Behavioralism in Political Science*, ed. James C. Charlesworth (Philadelphia: American Academy of Science, 1962); Heinz Eulau, *The Behavioral Persuasion in Politics* (New York: Random House, 1963).

<sup>28</sup> David Easton, “The Decline of Modern Political Theory,” *Journal of Politics* 13(1) (1951): 36-58.

enlargement of democratic aspiration and imagination must be accompanied by a painstaking effort to find out conditions for realizing that aspiration and imagination. However, behavioralism takes this insight in a different direction. Instead of engaging in a critical dialectic between imagination and reality, behavioralism constructs the democratic ideal entirely out of the “observed and observable” world, closing the productive gap between what *is* and what *could be*. Behavioralists start by looking at the countries commonly called democratic, study how those countries work, and taking a crucial if unwitting step, equate the working of those countries with the manifestation of the democratic ideal itself. In characteristically paradoxical terms of American political science, behavioralists expect to establish the “validity of democratic principles” by “empirical investigation.”<sup>29</sup>

Having thus fixed their eyes on the observed world and the individuals therein, behavioralists extracted a purportedly realistic concept of democracy by studying the country commonly called democratic, namely, the United States. Robert Dahl’s influential account of “polyarchy” is representative of this approach. Echoing Schumpeter, Dahl defined democracy as a method by which “ordinary citizens exert a relatively high degree of control over leaders.”<sup>30</sup> He rejected the view identifying democracy with the will of the people as a myth, because “the people” (which Dahl the behavioralist equated with a majority) does not exist in contemporary societies. As far as Dahl saw, there are only “groups of various types and sizes, all seeking in various ways to advance their goals, usually at the expense, at least in part, of others.”<sup>31</sup> Thus what distinguishes democracy from dictatorship is neither majority

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<sup>29</sup> Henry B. Mayo, “How Can We Justify Democracy?” *American Political Science Review* 56(3) (1962), 559.

<sup>30</sup> Robert A. Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 3.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 131. See also David Truman, *The Governmental Process: Political Interests and Public Opinion* (New York: Knopf, 1951), esp. chap. 16.



rule nor minority rule, but “minorities rule.”<sup>32</sup> Elections are crucial, Dahl insisted, not because they reveal the preference of a majority but because, when combined with continuous political competition, they “vastly increase the size, number, and variety of minorities whose preferences ... will influence the outcome of governmental decisions.”<sup>33</sup> American democracy is a good approximation of polyarchy in that it provides a “high probability that an active and legitimate group in the population can make itself heard effectively at some crucial stage in the process of decision.” This, Dahl concluded, is “no mean thing in a political system.”<sup>34</sup> At any rate, that is pretty much all a realistic concept of democracy can ask for—a “markedly decentralized system” in which “decisions are made by endless bargaining.”<sup>35</sup>

Behavioralists’ celebration of pluralism, however, is haunted by a disconcerting gap. The image of thriving and vibrant minorities is interrupted by overwhelming evidence that large segments of the population are apathetic about politics. Interestingly, many behavioralists were unmoved by widespread apathy that troubled the earlier generation of political scientists so much. For example, Bernard Berelson, Paul Lazarsfeld, and William McPhee found in their study of Elmira, New York that most people cast their ballot with little knowledge, motivation, or principle, contradicting the requirements of the citizen commonly assumed for the successful operation of democracy.<sup>36</sup> But for them it was not cause for alarm, let alone reform. On the contrary, apathy is lauded for relaxing partisanship, providing maneuvering

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<sup>32</sup> Dahl, *Preface*, 133.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 132-133.

<sup>34</sup> It should be noted that Dahl, and his close collaborator Charles E. Lindblom, became disillusioned with the pluralist account of American democracy, increasingly concerned with the economic and social problems that inhibit the achievement of equality and democracy. Robert A. Dahl, *A Preface to Economic Democracy* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985); *idem.*, *Democracy and Its Critics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); *idem.*, *On Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Charles E. Lindblom, *Politics and Markets* (New York: Basic Books, 1977); *idem.*, “Another State of Mind,” *American Political Science Review* 76(1) (1982): 9-21.

<sup>35</sup> Dahl, *Preface*, 150.

<sup>36</sup> Bernard R. Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee, *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), 307-311.

room for political shifts, and facilitating compromise. “Low affect toward the election—not caring much—underlies the resolution of many political problems,” they concluded.<sup>37</sup> Reporting similar findings, Herbert McClosky put the matter in even blunter terms. “Democratic viability is ... saved by the fact that those who are most confused about democratic ideas are also likely to be politically apathetic and without significant influence ... [A]pathy ... keep[s] doubters [of the established values] from acting upon their differences.”<sup>38</sup> As one observer of the discipline remarked, behavioralists “christened as the very definition of democracy the apathy and popular ignorance of politics Merriam derided.”<sup>39</sup>

It is hard to understand this peculiar embrace of apathy by self-proclaimed democratic theorists without considering the influence of the Cold War. As discussed in the previous chapter, the staple of Cold War psychology was the fear of the masses. As Schumpeter summarily quipped, “[t]he electoral mass is incapable of action other than a stampede.”<sup>40</sup> And this fear of the masses was precisely what guided prominent behavioralists’ study of democracy. Seymour Martin Lipset, for example, took pains to show how people with low income, low socioeconomic status, and low education tend to have authoritarian tendencies, and how they are likely to be attracted to an extremist movement (i.e., fascism and Communism) rather than a moderate and democratic one.<sup>41</sup> David Truman worried that people’s anxiety, “unguided by customary instruments of leadership,” might lead to “an irresponsible initiative that under certain conditions may be parlayed into a force of monstrous destructiveness.”<sup>42</sup> Drawing on studies like these, Dahl qualified his emphasis on the activity of people,

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 314-315.

<sup>38</sup> Herbert McClosky, “Consensus and Ideology in American Politics,” *American Political Science Review* 58(2) (1964), 376.

<sup>39</sup> Seidelman, *Disenchanted Realists*, 16.

<sup>40</sup> Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, 283.

<sup>41</sup> Lipset, *Political Man*, 97-130.

<sup>42</sup> David B. Truman, “The American System in Crisis,” *Political Science Quarterly* 74(4) (1959), 491, 492-493.

musings that if “an increase in political activity brings the authoritarian-minded [lower class] into the political arena,” it could undermine polyarchy.<sup>43</sup> It was the fear of the “irrational masses” and the perceived need to restrain them that governed behavioralists’ welcoming disposition toward apathy. “For Truman and his colleagues,” Ira Katznelson testified, “it followed implicitly (certainly these authors explicitly preferred other values) that it is far better for the excluded to remain apolitical than challenge the dirty secrets of the regime.”<sup>44</sup>

Taken in context, behavioralists’ focus on order and stability is understandable; the perceived threat was undoubtedly great, and they needed a clear answer as to whether democracy is capable of dealing with that threat. But their urgent concern crippled as much as it guided their vision of democracy. For one thing, as the flip side of its bias against the masses, the behavioralist account of democracy has strong elitist implications.<sup>45</sup> And behavioralists are not particularly apologetic about it. Pointing to the fall of China and the Sputnik crisis, Truman cautioned that the American political system would be in grave danger if “the holders of power and privilege are unaware of their positions.”<sup>46</sup> Likewise, V. O. Key, though in an attempt to challenge the reckless charges that the masses are indifferent or foolish, placed great emphasis on the role of elites. “The critical element for the health of a democratic order consists in the beliefs, standards, and competence of those who compose the influentials, the opinion-leaders, the political activists ... The responsibility rests here, not in the masses of the people.”<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Dahl, *Preface*, 89.

<sup>44</sup> Ira Katznelson, “The Subtle Politics of Developing Emergency: Political Science as Liberal Guardianship,” in *The Cold War and the University: Toward an Intellectual History of the Postwar Years*, eds., Noam Chomsky, et al. (New York: New Press, 1997), 255.

<sup>45</sup> This issue has generated a passionate debate between Jack L. Walker and Dahl. Jack L. Walker, “A Critique of Elitist Theory of Democracy”; Robert A. Dahl, “Further Reflections on the ‘Elitist Theory of Democracy’”; Jack L. Walker, “A Reply to ‘Further Reflections on the Elitist Theory of Democracy’,” in *American Political Science Review* 60(2) (1966): 285-295, 296-305, 391-392, respectively.

<sup>46</sup> Truman, “The American System in Crisis,” 489.

<sup>47</sup> V. O. Key, *Public Opinion and American Democracy* (New York, Knopf, 1961), 558.

More generally, it is difficult to deny that behavioralism paints too benign a picture of pluralism. As many critics have pointed out, behaviorist democracy is not as open and inclusive as it is advertised by its proponents and, to that extent, its interpretation of apathy as a sign of content or as the lack of virtue on the part of people is self-serving. For instance, Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz argued that due to its exclusive focus on observable decisions behavioralists were blind to the problem of “non-decision”—the ways in which the powerful actors set agendas so that certain issues do not even reach the decision-making arena.<sup>48</sup> Steven Lukes raised a more fundamental issue, suggesting that behavioralists failed to take into account the possibility that people’s preferences themselves are skewed by power relations.<sup>49</sup> E. E. Schattschneider observed that behaviorist democracy tended to privatize and localize conflict rather than socializing, nationalizing, and democratizing it, thereby containing the scope of political conflict in favor of elites.<sup>50</sup> What these otherwise diverse critiques have in common is a sense that behaviorist democracy is biased toward the preservation of the status quo, too much to claim *democratic* character. As Schattschneider put it, “the flaw in the pluralist heaven is that the heavenly chorus sings with a strong upper-class accent.”<sup>51</sup>

Still, the problem might go deeper. The fact that behaviorist democracy *excludes* a large number of people certainly is part of the problem. But the heart of the matter, I suspect, might lie in the way in which behaviorist democracy *includes* people.

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<sup>48</sup> Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, “Two Faces of Power,” *American Political Science Review* 56(4) (1962): 947-952; idem., “Decisions and Non-decisions: An Analytical Framework,” *American Political Science Review* 57(3) (1963): 632-642.

<sup>49</sup> Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View* (London: MacMillan, 1974).

<sup>50</sup> E. E. Schattschneider, *The Semi-Sovereign People: A Realist’s View of Democracy in America* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1960).

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

Let us begin by clarifying exactly what it is that behavioralists want to preserve. True, behavioralists highlighted stability and order, but they would most likely resent the charge that they did so to serve the upper-class interest or to block social changes altogether. What, then, is it that behavioralists try so hard to protect from disturbances? Truman gives us the most explicit answer. “The great political task now is to perpetuate a viable system.”<sup>52</sup> Concerning the nature of this “viable system,” David Easton’s systems theory provides a good illustration. Influenced by Wiener’s cybernetics, Easton imagined a political system as a “continuous feedback loop” that receives various inputs from “the environments” and produces political outputs which, then, modifies the environments and the next round of inputs.<sup>53</sup> This image of a system abstracted from actual people and their actions pervaded the behavioralist view of democracy. Even in Dahl’s account of polyarchy placing so much emphasis on the activity of people, one senses the presence of a political system that works out a compromise on its own while countless minorities are engaged in endless bargaining. This belief in the mysterious working of a self-regulating system, I submit, is another significant reason why behavioralists failed to recognize the threat posed by pervasive apathy. Berelson and his colleagues summarily described this mentality. “*Individual voters* today seem unable to satisfy the requirements for a democratic system of government outlined by political theorists. But the *system of democracy* does meet certain requirements for a going political organization. The individual members may not meet all the standards, but the whole nevertheless survives and grows.”<sup>54</sup>

If behavioralists’ account of a self-regulating system sounds overly wishful and intellectually unwarranted, it should. It rests on a set of assumptions, the origins of which we have identified in the Cold War context in the previous chapter. First, it

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<sup>52</sup> Truman, *Governmental Process*, 524.

<sup>53</sup> David Easton, *A Framework for Political Analysis* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1965), 111.

<sup>54</sup> Berelson et al., *Voting*, 312, emphasis in original.

assumes that all the input elements can be translated into the terms recognized by the system and thus are given equal shot at influencing outputs. But as exemplified in the free market that only recognizes preferences expressed in terms of monetary value, systems often have a selective process marginalizing inputs that fail to conform to their terms. Second, and related, behavioralists' systems thinking imagines a self-contained and benign mechanism that allows inputs and outputs to freely exchange influences. In other words, it does not consider disciplinary effects of the system itself or, more fundamentally, external forces that shape the terms of the system. To understand this point, we may simply recall Wiener's enemy pilot. When the pilot enters the aircraft, his "inputs" are predetermined by his assignment. And he is constantly forced to produce those inputs by the physical pressure that increases with the degree to which he fails to conform to the mechanical requirements of the aircraft.

So what, exactly, are the terms of the political system in behavioralists' mind? While calling for the perpetuation of a viable system, Truman argues that we could achieve that goal only by maintaining the conditions that promote a widespread understanding and appreciation of the "rules of the game," which he defines as "interests or expectations that are so widely held in society and are so reflected in the behavior of almost all citizens that they are, so to speak, taken for granted."<sup>55</sup> Dahl makes the same point in his perplexing remark that polyarchy as minorities rule is simultaneously majority rule. The seeming contradiction of this remark is resolved, Dahl asserts, insofar as specific policies selected by the bargaining among minorities "lie most of the time within the bounds of consensus set by the important values of the politically active members of the society, of whom the voters are a key group."<sup>56</sup> This consensus—or the "democratic creed," as Dahl calls it—would involve a belief in

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<sup>55</sup> Truman, *Governmental Process*, 512. See also Berelson et al, *Voting*, 312-313.

<sup>56</sup> Dahl, *Preface*, 132.

democracy as the best form of government, in the desirability of basic rights and procedures, and in the essential legitimacy of the governmental institutions. This may sound innocuous at first glance, but consider how, as Dahl recognizes, it is in reality often attached to the perilously complacent view that “our system is not only democratic but is perhaps the most perfect expression of democracy that exists anywhere; if deficiencies exist, either they can, and ultimately will, be remedied, or else they reflect the usual gap between ideal and reality that men of common sense take for granted.”<sup>57</sup>

But it is not complacency latent in the “terms of the system” that worries Dahl. On the contrary, he proposes ways to reinforce and reproduce the value consensus, because it “tends to be incomplete” and typically “decays.”<sup>58</sup> He entertains the idea that powerful social processes like formal schooling would make “rejection of [the democratic creed] almost impossible.” This sounds quite chilling, but Dahl is adamant. “To reject the creed is infinitely more than a simple matter of disagreement. To reject the creed is to reject one’s society and one’s chances of full acceptance in it—in short, to be an outcast ... To reject the democratic creed is in effect to refuse to be an American. As a nation we have taken great pains to insure that few citizens will ever want to do anything so rash, so preposterous—in fact, so wholly un-American.”<sup>59</sup>

In a society where people are disciplined so thoroughly by the democratic creed and those who fail to conform to that creed are pushed outside “the system,” democratic politics takes on a radically different meaning. Dahl gives an expression to this situation. “[W]hat we ordinarily describe as democratic “politics” is merely the chaff. It is the surface manifestation, representing superficial conflicts. Prior to politics,

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<sup>57</sup> Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1961), 316

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 317.

beneath it, enveloping it, restricting it, conditioning it, is the underlying consensus on policy that usually exists in the society among a predominant portion of the politically active members.”<sup>60</sup> But if all the important stuff of politics can be taken care of by disciplinary mechanisms such as the education system, and if politics is merely the “chaff,” why would ordinary people bother to care about politics at all? The problem only worsens with those who happen to be outside the existing value consensus. Take another look at Dahl’s praise of American democracy, now with a particular attention to the qualifiers he uses. “[In American democracy] an *active* and *legitimate* group in the population can make itself heard.” By “active” Dahl refers primarily to people who vote, but what about “legitimate?” Here is his definition: “those whose activity is accepted as right and proper by a preponderant portion of the active.”<sup>61</sup> In effect, then, Dahl poses an almost insurmountable obstacle to the “outsiders.” They need to transform the value consensus to get recognized as legitimate equals; and yet, the only way to do it is to conform to that consensus, because “no appeal is likely to succeed unless it is framed in terms consistent with the creed.”<sup>62</sup> Locked in this vicious circle, the outsiders, too, have good reason to withdraw from politics and become apathetic. Behavioralist democracy does not simply neglect or condone, but *produces* democratic disaffection.

### **The Capitalist Restructuring of Democracy: Rational Choice Theory**

If behavioralism severely constrains the scope of democracy by making the goals and terms of politics incontestable, rational choice theory redefines the very nature of democracy in accordance with the precepts of the capitalist economy. In particular, the concept of rationality and the image of the individual as the bearer of

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<sup>60</sup> Dahl, *Preface*, 132.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>62</sup> Dahl, *Who Governs?*, 324.



rationality (“the rational actor”) are a basic tenet that unifies diverse branches of rational choice theory such as social choice theory, public choice theory, and positive political theory. While it has almost become a matter of convention to say that rational choice theory is an economic approach to politics, it is important to emphasize that rational choice theory shares certain assumptions with the *postwar variant* of neoclassical economics. The generic expression “economic approach” ascribes to the field of economics more continuity and homogeneity than actually exists. But the fact of the matter is that the rational actor model arose as the conceptual basis of war sciences and profoundly influenced the development of both postwar economics and rational choice theory.<sup>63</sup>

Rational choice theory is a direct descendant of game theory. During World War II, game theoretic analysis was picked up by the Anti-Submarine Warfare Operations Research Group attached to the Navy and used to find the most efficient way to allocate limited resources among various military demands (for example, it was used to figure out how to deploy a limited number of aircraft in the Strait of Gibraltar to detect German U-boats. This is a perfect two-person zero-sum game situation, where the patrolling airplane tries to maximize the chance of detecting, and the U-boat tries to minimize that chance). After the war, game theory found its home at the RAND Corporation, which, as noted in the previous chapter, had close ties to the military.<sup>64</sup> Its new task was even more serious than the efficient detection of U-boats: making projections and devising hypothetical strategies about intercontinental warfare, namely, a possible nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union. Given that the content and the character of game theory were guided by military concerns, it

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<sup>63</sup> On the influence of war sciences on postwar economics, see Philip Mirowski, *Machine Dreams: Economics Becomes a Cyborg Science* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>64</sup> Robert J. Leonard, “Creating a Context for Game Theory,” in *Toward a History of Game Theory*, ed. E. R. Weintraub (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), 29-76, esp. 62-69.

is not surprising that the primary goal of game theory was the *reduction of uncertainty under the conditions of uncertainty*. To make predictions about the enemy whom they did not and could not actually know, game theorists had to *imagine* the enemy in familiar, quantifiable, and predictable terms. Thus at RAND, a new concept of rationality came into being. Rationality was reduced to abstract algorithms; the idea that realization of rationality might require actual people's actual interactions disappeared, because such interactions tend to disrupt order and defy management or, in technical terms, increase uncertainty—game theory's ultimate fear.

The connection between RAND and rational choice theory is so close that one cannot but suspect its claim to scientific neutrality.<sup>65</sup> There are seven works considered canonical in rational choice theory: John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern's *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior* (1944), Duncan Black's "On the Rationale of Group Decision Making" (1948), Kenneth Arrow's *Social Choice and Individual Values* (1951), Anthony Downs' *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957), James Buchanan and Gordon Tullock's *The Calculus of Consent* (1962), William Riker's *The Theory of Political Coalition* (1965), and Mancur Olson's *The Logic of Collective Action* (1965). Six of them have direct ties to RAND: John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern's pioneering work was enthusiastically received at RAND and applied to an analysis of atomic weapons strategy. Kenneth Arrow's work grew out of his RAND assignment that mathematically determines the Soviet

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<sup>65</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter, RAND's rational management technologies exerted a powerful influence on the structure and function of the national security state, not because it was theoretically valid or empirically supported but because it successfully made claims to scientific objectivity. In this respect, S. M. Adamae's following observation is highly suggestive: "With the institutionalization of systems analysis and PPBS, and the subsequent development of the new discipline of policy analysis, the interplay of theoretical validity and successful promulgation were reversed: rational decision technologies gained legitimacy not on paper or in intellectual debate, but *because* they became institutionalized in practice and played the role of transferring authority, rationalizing ponderous decisions, and shaping the material reality of people's lives." S. M. Adamae, *Rationalizing Capitalist Democracy: The Cold War Origins of Rational Choice Liberalism* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 72.

Union's collective utility function. Anthony Downs, James Buchanan, and Mancur Olson spent time at RAND in a crucial period leading up to the production of their works. Although William Riker had no direct affiliation with RAND, he developed during 1961-62 the main ideas of his book at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University where Kenneth Arrow was also a fellow. Only Duncan Black worked outside the national security think tank complex, but his influence in the institutionalization of rational choice theory was marginal.

Against this backdrop, the peculiarity of the rational actor assumption becomes clearer. While there are ongoing debates among practitioners, the rational actor is generally defined as an individual who pursues certain goals reflecting her perceived self-interest by consciously choosing the alternative with the highest expected utility under conditions of full information.<sup>66</sup> This hypothetical person, rational choice theorists argue, should be the sole basis of all collective decision-making.

As simple as it may seem at first glance, this conceptualization of the rational actor is charged with a number of assumptions. Albert Hirschmann's famous account of the ascendance of the concept "interest" in seventeenth century European thinking provides a broad background of our discussion. According to Hirschmann, the pursuit of self-interest, long denounced as one of men's principal sins, came to be accepted as an expression of a "calm passion" that could counter the destructive working of more fanatic types of passion such as desire for power or lust. This rather unexpected affirmation of self-interest occurred primarily because self-interested behavior promised to be more predictable. As Hirschmann puts it, "in pursuit of their interest men were expected or assumed to be steadfast, single-minded, and methodical, in total contrast to the stereotyped behavior of men who are buffeted and blinded by their

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<sup>66</sup> Some of these assumptions have been loosened or modified in the later literature. Some rational choice theorists now think that the rational actor is less knowledgeable about their alternatives and, instead of always trying to maximize utility, satisfies some minimum utility or minimizes regret.

passions.”<sup>67</sup> For those obsessed with the inconstancy of human affairs in the post-Hobbesian age (Locke designated “the inconstant, uncertain, unknown, arbitrary will of another man” as the greatest evil), this was no small appeal. It is, then, no surprise that self-interest was vindicated again in the Cold War context in which totalitarianism was associated with affective excess. David Riesman observed how “people in pursuit of their private ends” engaged in the “quieter modes of resistance to totalitarianism.”<sup>68</sup> For Riesman pervasive apathy, endemic corruption, a thriving black market, and rampant crime in the Soviet Union suggested that the ineradicably self-centered nature of human beings might just be the most effective deterrent to the communist threat. Based on this observation, Riesman went so far as to propose to “re-evaluate the role of corruption [associated with the pursuit of self-interest] ... with less emphasis on its obviously malign features and more on its power as an antidote to fanaticism.”<sup>69</sup>

Seen in this light, the rational actor assumption can be viewed as a peculiar theorization of self-interest. As Hirschmann tells us, when it first gained currency the concept of self-interest denoted the act of reflecting on the manner in which one pursues her broadly defined aspirations. The concept of rationality used in rational choice theory, then, is faithful to this original meaning of self-interest. Focusing on the calculation of means, not the determination of goals, rational choice theory assumes that the rational actor’s preferences are *already determined*. As Arrow repeatedly emphasizes in his pioneering work, rational choice theory is concerned with “a procedure for passing from a set of *known* individual tastes to a pattern of social decision-making.”<sup>70</sup> This position is based partly on Arrow’s view that interpersonal

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<sup>67</sup> Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism Before Its Triumph* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), 54.

<sup>68</sup> David Riesman, “Some Observations on the Limits of Totalitarian Power,” *Antioch Review* 12(2) (1952), 164, 161.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>70</sup> Kenneth J. Arrow, *Social Choice and Individual Values* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1951), 2, emphasis added; see also 12, 18, 34. Hereafter cited in the text as SCIV followed by page numbers.

comparison of utility is impossible, that is, individual preferences are entirely subjective—a view that Arrow takes from the debate in welfare economics (SCIV 9). But his *laissez-fair* disposition toward individual preferences is not merely a technical matter. Rather, it comes as much from a characteristically Cold War suspicion that any collective attempt to engage with individual preferences is totalitarian. Echoing Schumpeter, Arrow justifies his rational actor model by contrasting his theory to “idealist political philosophy” exemplified by Rousseau and Kant. According to Arrow, idealist political philosophy is predicated on a stark division between individual preferences “exist[ing] at any given instant under varying external influences” and “some sort of consensus on the ends of society” that is “assumed to exist” (SCIV 81-86). Arrow, like Schumpeter, does not allow any movement between these two registers; the relationship between individual preferences and the common good is one of winner-take-all competition rather than mutually beneficial critical dialogue. Based on this static frame of thinking, Arrow finds that “[e]thical absolutism” he sees in idealist political philosophy is “unsatisfying to a mind brought up in the liberal heritage” even while admitting that his *laissez-fair* position has the “danger of a glorification of the status quo” (SCIV 84-85).

Since the process through which the actor forms her goals is not interrogated, rationality is reduced to a means to achieve predetermined ends. As Downs stated, “the term rational is never applied to an agent’s ends, but only to his means. This follows from the definition of rational as efficient, i.e., maximizing output for a given input, or minimizing input for a given output.”<sup>71</sup> At first glance, this appears to be a typical description of the rational actor assumption widely used in neoclassical economics. It hides, however, the fact that rational choice theory relies on a simpler

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<sup>71</sup> Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: Harper, 1957), 5. Hereafter cited in the text as ETD followed by page numbers.

and narrower concept of rationality. Influenced by game theory, rational choice theory significantly simplifies the function of rationality. Arrow illustrates this point in postulating that individuals are rational insofar as they satisfy two axioms (SCIV 19):

Axiom I: *For all  $x$  and  $y$ , either  $x R y$  or  $y R x$ .*

Axiom II: *For all  $x$ ,  $y$ , and  $z$ ,  $x R y$  and  $y R z$  imply  $x R z$ .* (SCIV 13)

Here “R” means “preferred or indifferent to.” So in rational choice theory, to be rational the individual only needs to be able to decide her preference between two given alternatives (Axiom I) as long as she maintains logical consistency in her preference-ordering (Axiom II). The rational actor is no longer required, as in economics, to engage in a complex calculation with regard to her diminishing marginal utility for multiple commodities and her budget constraints; instead, she simply decides what she prefers between  $x$  and  $y$ . As Arrow states, rational choice theory assumes that “there is a basic set of alternatives which could conceivably be presented to the chooser” and that the chooser is “required to choose one out of this set”—an assumption, he admits, “not customarily employed in economics, though familiar in mathematics and particularly in symbolic logic” (SCIV 11-12). Importantly, while rational choice theory vows to not pry into how rational individuals determine their goals, it nevertheless predetermines the nature of those goals. Downs, saying that “Schumpeter’s profound analysis of democracy forms the inspiration and foundation” for his whole analysis, posits that the individual acts only to maximize specifiable benefits from government activity (ETD 36-37).

Rational choice theory’s conception of individual rationality as an instrument concerned exclusively with the efficiency of attaining given goals shapes its view of social order. Rational choice theory holds that a social order must represent an

objective aggregation of individual preferences. Arrow remarks that he “will assume ... that individual values are taken as data and are not capable of being altered by the nature of the decision process itself” (SCIV 9). In this portrayal, democratic politics does not involve deliberation and contestation that challenge the values and interests that people bring to the political arena. In other words, people play little role in actually making collective decisions; all the responsibility is transferred to the methods of voting that are also deemed a technical matter. This, then, is an apt illustration of instrumental democracy. As we have examined in the previous chapter with regard to Schumpeter’s theory of democracy, instrumental democracy no longer works through the productive tension between individual differences and the common good so that the former does not become destructive and the latter tyrannical. Likewise, in a democracy envisioned by rational choice theory individuals and political processes exist in a highly bifurcated fashion: on one side, there are completely spontaneous individual preferences that require neither articulation nor justification; on the other side, there is a mathematical formula that cannot be tampered with by individual initiatives. These two sides, moreover, necessitate and feed each other. Rational behavior is impossible, for instance, if individuals cannot expect the government to act rationally, and vice versa. The consequence is a self-perpetuating system in which the individual and the government constantly discipline each other to be rational while eradicating “non-rational” elements as a source of disturbance.

This self-perpetuation is a problem because, as a close analysis of rational choice theory reveals, a democracy founded solely on rationality is ridden with contradictions. First of all, one of the major findings of rational choice theory is that voting, which is equated with democracy, is unable to aggregate individual preferences into a rational collective outcome—unable, that is, to do the job assigned to it by rational choice theory. Arrow shows this point in his famous “impossibility

theorem,” which is a formalization of what is known as the “voter’s paradox” first noted by the French political philosopher Condorcet. Condorcet noted that when three or more individuals try to choose among three or more alternatives by a majority vote, their attempt will inevitably fail. Suppose that there are three individuals (1, 2, 3) voting for competing parties to receive one of three alternatives (A, B, C) as benefits.

Individuals	Preference rankings		
	First	Second	Third
1	x	y	z
2	y	z	x
3	z	x	y

When individual preferences are in a cycle like this, voting cannot produce a rational outcome that optimizes all the participants’ preferences. Provided that individuals vote purely according to their preferences, any chosen outcome can be defeated by one of the other outcomes (if the government chooses x, both 2 and 3 prefer y and vote for an opposition that promises to choose y; if y is chosen, both 1 and 3 prefer x; if z is chosen, both 1 and 2 prefer y). Thus the outcome is determined not by individual preferences but by “irrational” factors such as the power of one player to dominate others or the manipulation of the voting process through, for instance, control of the agenda.

Arrow finds that the democratic procedure of all varieties suffers from cycling majorities, if it meets the minimal criteria of fairness—if, for example, it allows individuals to prefer any alternatives and rank them in any way they want without limitations (condition of “universal domain”); if it tries to ensure that the collective outcome is determined exclusively by individual preferences and not influenced by



external factors (“citizens’ sovereignty”); and if it keeps any one person’s preference from dominating others’ (“nondictatorship”) (SCIV 24-31).<sup>72</sup> As he puts it, “If we exclude the possibility of interpersonal comparisons of utility, then the only methods of passing from individual tastes to social preferences which will be satisfactory and which will be defined for a wide range of sets of individual orderings are either imposed or dictatorial ... [T]he doctrine of voters’ sovereignty is incompatible with that of collective rationality” (SCIV 59-60, emphasis eliminated).

Some rational choice theorists, such as William Riker, welcomes this instability as a reason to reject what he calls “populism”—his equivalent of Schumpeter’s “classical doctrine of democracy” or Arrow’s “idealist political philosophy”—represented, unsurprisingly, by Rousseau. As he concludes in a characteristically forthright phrase, “[p]opulism as a moral imperative depends on the existence of a popular will discovered by voting. But if voting does not discover or reveal a will, then the moral imperative evaporates because there is nothing to be commanded. If the people speak in meaningless tongues, they cannot utter the law that makes them free. Populism fails, therefore, not because it is morally wrong, but merely because it is empty.”<sup>73</sup> As an alternative, Riker offers what he calls “liberalism” that he associates with Madison. According to Riker’s interpretation, liberalism only expects from voting (i.e., democracy) the *possibility* of approving or rejecting officials. In other words, Riker’s liberalism does not require unwanted officials to be *actually* removed or wanted ones *actually* elected. As he acknowledges, “it may happen that an

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<sup>72</sup> Arrow lists two more conditions, but they are concerned more with the logical necessity of the model than the fairness of the decision procedure. One is that individuals are able to rank their options in a logically consistent way (“rationality”); the other is that individuals determine their preferences between two alternatives on their own merit without taking into account other alternatives (“independence of irrelevant alternatives”).

<sup>73</sup> William H. Riker, *Liberalism Against Populism: A Confrontation between the Theory of Democracy and the Theory of Social Choice* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1982), 239. On Riker’s mischaracterization of populism, see Jules Coleman and John Ferejohn, “Democracy and Social Choice,” *Ethics* 97 (1986): 6-25; Carole Pateman, “Social Choice or Democracy? A Comment on Coleman and Ferejohn,” *Ethics* 97 (1986): 39-46.

uninformed or unsophisticated or well-manipulated electorate fails to operate the voting system as its members would wish.” If people succeed in electing or rejecting officials as intended once in a while, that is good enough a vindication of liberalism.<sup>74</sup> But as we will see presently, if people are rational actors who are concerned only with efficiently gaining benefits and if democracy (reduced to voting) is an eminently inefficient device, it is not clear why people would *ever* try to overcome apathy and the effects of manipulation. The problem gets worse as political issues grow more complex and manipulation becomes more pervasive. The rational actor assumption keeps undermining Riker’s hope for the periodic success of voting.

Unlike Riker, most rational choice theorists have found the indeterminacy of voting caused by cyclical majorities troubling and tried to solve Arrow’s impossibility theorem in various ways. As Nicholas Miller points out, the general consensus among rational choice theorists is that the probability of cyclical majorities increases as the number of individuals and alternatives increases. So they focused their efforts on reducing the heterogeneity of individuals and alternatives by, for example, requiring that people’s preferences be ordered along a single dimension (e.g., class, race, gender, etc.), restricting the range of values to be considered, or by postulating a high degree of consensus among voters.<sup>75</sup> One of the problems of this strategy, as Miller notes, is that it freezes a current distribution of preferences, thereby perpetuating the same winning outcome over time. This, of course, threatens the viability of democracy at its core. If the same group of people always wins, those who are in the losing group, as rational individuals, have no incentive to abide by the democratic procedure. Only if “preferences are pluralistically distributed,” Miller argues, “political disaffection

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<sup>74</sup> Riker, *Liberalism Against Populism*, 243.

<sup>75</sup> Nicholas R. Miller, “Pluralism and Social Choice,” *American Political Science Review* 77(3) (1983), 739-740.

plausibly is reduced.”<sup>76</sup> At this point, we are brought back to the pluralist democracy championed by behavioralism we have examined in the previous section. Pace Miller (and Riker who speaks about the political flux generated by cyclical majorities as the source of political evolution, which he likens to natural selection<sup>77</sup>), our analysis tells us that embracing cyclical majorities as a way to promote pluralism is not a fundamental solution to the problem of disaffection, since behavioralism is plagued by its own tendencies to generate disaffection.

Rational choice theory eliminates the rational actor’s incentive to participate by proving democracy to be an inefficient mechanism for amalgamating individual preferences into a collective decision. But more fundamentally, non-participation is inherent in the very definition of the rational actor. As Down famously reasons, in a situation where millions of people are eligible to vote, every rational voter realizes the probability that his vote will decide the election is extremely small. The result, Downs writes, is “an enormously diminished incentive for voters to acquire political information before voting” (ETD 245). Because the cost (time invested in acquiring information, registering, going to the polls, and so on) almost always exceeds the benefit (desired electoral outcome), the rational actor will never participate in voting (ETD 265). So the phenomenon of apathy that behavioralists observed is redescribed by Downs as “rational abstention.” But because the postulates of rational choice theory leads him to conclude that *everyone*—not just certain segments of the population as in the case of behavioralism—will abstain, Downs cannot be quite welcoming about his own findings. “When no one votes,” he grimly writes, “democracy collapses,” (ETD 267).

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 743.

<sup>77</sup> Riker, *Liberalism Against Populism*, chap. 8.

In his attempt to save democracy, however, Downs deviates from the premises of rational choice theory. His initial intuition is to maintain the rational choice framework by formulating the preservation of democracy as a long-term benefit. The rational voter, Downs asserts, can view democracy as “a capital sum which pays interest at each election.” But this only shifts the locus of the problem without actually solving it. As he concedes, the possible contribution of one person to the preservation of democracy is so small (as it is in the case of voting) that it does not make sense for any rational person to act at all (ETD 270). Having thus reached an impasse, Downs is forced to resort to aspects of human affairs that rational choice theory tries so hard to banish from its model. He suggests the rational actor “is willing to bear certain short-run cost he could avoid in order to *do his share* in providing long-run benefit [preservation of democracy],” because “[r]ational men in a democracy are motivated to some extent by a *sense of social responsibility* relatively independent of their own short-run gains and losses” (ETD 270, 267, emphasis added). He also speculates that “[o]ne thing that all citizens in our model have in common is the *desire* to see democracy work” and they are willing to “bear at least some cost” because the collapse of democracy is “so disastrous” (ETD 268, emphasis added).

A person “doing his share” out of a “sense of social responsibility” and a “desire” to preserve democracy—this image severely compromises, if not contradicts, the purportedly universal rational actor model on which rational choice theory is predicated.<sup>78</sup> The essence of rational choice theory is to explain human behavior based exclusively on the narrow concept of rationality, ruling out all the other motivational forces. As Downs unambiguously states concerning elections, “[t]he

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<sup>78</sup> In an article written almost thirty years after, Downs argues that democracy “depends upon widespread acceptance and practice of certain values among the citizenry itself.” He recognizes that those values are culturally and historically determined entities and exist separate from the narrow concept of rationality. Anthony Downs, “Social Values and Democracy,” in *Economic Approaches*, 143-170, quote at 143.

political function of elections in a democracy, we assume, is to select a government. Therefore rational behavior in connection with elections is behavior oriented toward this end and no other” (ETD 7). But Downs is ultimately unable to explain how elections (i.e., democracy) can survive as a political institution without either loosening the rational actor assumptions or recognizing that democracy is not merely an instrument to select a government. This is more than a moment of theoretical incoherence, insofar as rational choice theory is an articulation of instrumental democracy which is a historical phenomenon. As I will discuss in the following chapter, the late twentieth century is pervaded with aggressive attempts to refashion the *practice* of democratic politics in terms of the rational actor. And in the real world, people’s sense of social responsibility does not sit on the bench waiting to be called to rescue democracy when rationality suddenly looks not so inspiring; the propagation of rationality as a social norm undermines people’s sense of social responsibility along with their affection for democratic institutions. The theoretical impasse of the rational choice account of democracy makes us wonder: what happens if democratic politics *actually* turns into a game played by rational individuals?

### **Globalizing Instrumental Democracy? Modernization Theory**

The impact of instrumental democracy was hardly limited to the conceptual arena. It also exerted real political and historical influence by becoming part of a broader discourse that shaped American foreign policy during the Cold War—modernization theory. Modernization theory was developed as a response to the concern acutely felt in postwar America. In its competition with the Soviet Union for the favor of, if not control over, many postcolonial states, the United States seemed outmaneuvered by its contender in laying out a clear map for development. The Soviet Union, many believed, was running ahead with its well-developed theory of historical

materialism. In *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1917), Lenin set out a thesis that imperialism was a manifestation of capitalism's inherent contradictions and a sign of its impending disintegration. The colonial world, Lenin implied, was bound to supersede the imperialist powers through revolution, just like the proletariat was in relation to the bourgeoisie. Lenin's reformulated historical materialism attracted leaders of postcolonial societies, not only because it assured that the "scientific law" of historical progress was on the side of their struggle for national liberation but also because it showed them an alternative path of development untainted by capitalism—which was perceived in most postcolonial societies as the colonizer's exploitive economic system. The Soviet Union's rapid industrialization at the time only served to make this theoretical promise look more plausible. In this situation, the American foreign policy elite were anxious to come up with its own metanarrative of historical progress to rival that of Communism.<sup>79</sup>

If RAND was the incubator of rational choice theory, it was the Center for International Studies at MIT (CENIS) that served as an institutional home for modernization theory. The person who helped establish CENIS was also the most influential articulator and propagator of modernization theory: Walt Whitman Rostow. Rostow wrote *The Stages of Economic Growth*, with a not-so-subtle subtitle "A Non-Communist Manifesto," which became the founding text of modernization theory. Rostow's thesis was that all societies developed along a universal linear path which he breaks down into five phases: "traditional society," "preconditions for take-off," "take-

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<sup>79</sup> This anxiety was clearly expressed, for example, at the 1954 Princeton Economic Conference attended by foreign policy makers, businessmen, labor leaders, and academics. Jerome Wiesner of MIT well summarized the worry shared by participants. "Unfortunately, we have not found the flame for the torch. That is, we don't have the overt ideological philosophy that we can tell to the natives [of postcolonial states] ... We can say such thing as 'freedom' and 'economic development,' but we do not have a positive goal which you can talk about, which you can describe how to achieve, etc., in the same sense that the Russians do." See Mark H. Haefele, "Walt Rostow's Stages of Economic Growth: Ideas and Action," in *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War*, eds., David C. Engerman et al. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 84-85, quote at 85.

off,” “drive for maturity,” and the “age of high mass-consumption.”<sup>80</sup> In this vision, the highest stage of development was represented by the West and, especially, the United States (Rostow extrapolated his account of the age of high mass-consumption exclusively from the American experience). As one CENIS study made clear, “Implicit ... in the use of such words as ‘transitional’ and ‘modernizing’ are some basic assumptions which we have asserted rather than proved—that is, that these [traditional] societies are indeed going through a process which will produce in them social and economic changes parallel to those which have occurred in modern Western states.”<sup>81</sup> Rostow and his fellow modernization theorists argued that the most effective way to fight the appeal of Communism in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East was to help the countries in those regions concentrate their revolutionary energy on a “take-off.” If they could accelerate the transition to the “next stage,” the argument went, affluence and a massive amount of consumer goods would resolve social discontent that was presumably a fertile soil of Communism. This idea had a profound impact on the foreign policy making of the 1960s in which Rostow himself was deeply involved, first as an advisor during Kennedy’s presidential campaign, then as head of the State Department’s Policy Planning Council in the Kenney administration, and, finally, as Johnson’s National Security Adviser.

It is worth emphasizing that modernization was presented as *comprehensive* progress that entails broad changes in the political, economic, cultural, and even psychological realms. Thus Rostow and others’ work on economic modernization was closely tied with works in other disciplines such as political science, sociology, psychology, and anthropology. More relevant to our discussion, some of the most

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<sup>80</sup> Walt Whitman Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), chap. 2.

<sup>81</sup> Max Millikan and Donald Blackmer, eds., *The Emerging Nations: Their Growth and United States Policy* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1961), 143.

influential political scientists at the time gathered around the Social Science Research Council's Committee on Comparative Politics established in 1953 and devoted their efforts to comprehending the relationship between social and political changes, giving rise to a whole body of literature which came to be known as "political development."

The central puzzle of political development arose from the idea widely accepted by its practitioners that modernization is characterized by both capitalism *and* liberal democracy. This is not a surprising assumption given that the end point of modernization was modeled on the 1950s United States. The trouble was that the capitalist development they espoused was found to generate political instability which was not consistent with the liberal democracy they also championed. As Samuel Huntington states, "economic development increases inequality at the same time that social mobilization decreases the legitimacy of that inequality. Both aspects of modernization combine to produce political instability."<sup>82</sup> How can we maintain the two pillars of modernization theory when one undermines the other?

The way in which modernization theorists dealt with this conundrum is highly reflective of the instrumental vision of democracy. Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba's *The Civic Culture* (1963), perhaps the most influential work in political development, illustrates two strategies modernization theorists deployed to manage destabilizing effects of modernization. It is telling that both strategies try only to contain people's demand for participation without interrogating what engenders that demand, namely, capitalism. The first strategy is to *constrict* the scope of participation. While promising the "emerging nations" that democracy "offers the ordinary man the opportunity to take part in the political decision-making process as an influential

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<sup>82</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1968), 58-59.



citizen,”<sup>83</sup> Almond and Verba stated, following Schumpeter, that “[i]n all societies, of course, the making of specific decisions is concentrated in the hands of very few people ... [T]he degree of democracy in a nation ... [is synonymous with] the degree to which ordinary citizens control those who make the significant decisions for a society—in most cases, governmental elites” (136). Taking a logical leap from empirical description to normative prescription—a move characteristic of many scientific theories of democracy—Almond and Verba went further and celebrated the weakness of ordinary citizens. “The comparative infrequency of political participation, its relative lack of importance for the individual, and the objective weakness of the ordinary man allow governmental elites to act. The inactivity of the ordinary man and his inability to influence decisions help provide the power that governmental elites need if they are able to make decisions” (346). Of course Almond and Verba recognized the need to keep the power of the elites in check, but they considered it sufficient to have a *possibility* of such checks. In other words, they argued that it is important for citizens to *think* they are able to influence the political process, even when in reality that may be, by their admission, “a myth.” What matters is “the very fact that citizens hold to this myth” (346).

The second strategy is to continually *suspend* the actual practice of participation. This strategy is pursued first by shifting the focus of discussion from structural conditions to “culture,” understood as individuals’ beliefs, attitudes, and orientations. As Almond and Verba put it, “the development of a stable and effective democratic government depends upon more than the structures of government and politics: it depends upon the orientations that people have to the political process—upon the political culture” (366; see also 6, 339, 347, 358). And a culture that is

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<sup>83</sup> Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1965), 3. Subsequent references cited parenthetically.

“appropriate for maintaining a stable and effective democratic political process” and “fits” the democratic political system is termed by Almond and Verba a “civic culture” (360). Composed of “a set of political orientations that are managed and balanced,” the civic culture is expected to produce a seemingly unattainable balance between “apparently contradictory demands” implied in the first strategy (360, 359): citizens ought to be at once deeply committed to the ideal of democratic participation *and* “relatively passive, uninvolved, and deferential to elites” (343). In other words, people are demanded to suspend their participation until the gap between the ideal of democracy and its elite-driven reality becomes unacceptably wide. People living in a civic culture (or more precisely, in the United States and Britain), Almond and Verba seem to believe, will be able to determine exactly when that threshold is crossed and moderate their participation accordingly. This argument is tautological insofar as the concept of civic culture already contains political moderation as its core element. And it is dangerously biased toward the status quo: whenever citizens resort to a more direct mode of participation in order to make their demands, it can now be repressed not just for the instability it causes but for something more profound—that is, for the violation of a “civic culture.” The problem gets even worse in the developing countries where a civic culture “must be newly created” (368). Because the intensity of people’s political action is attributed not to the urgency of structural changes but to cultural backwardness and psychological immaturity, their challenge to the existing system is always deemed premature. In the “underdeveloped” areas, participation is not quite foreclosed but almost infinitely postponed to an unspecified time in the future.

The implications of these strategies became painfully clear when they were translated into policies and applied to postcolonial countries. As noted above, modernization theory was emphatic about the need to accelerate capitalist development as a way to counter the influence of Communism. Modernization theory

thus not only legitimized but gave urgency to intervention in postcolonial countries. But since modernization theory also posited that ordinary people in the intervened countries were not prepared, culturally and psychologically, to pursue modernization on their own, the actual undertaking of intervention always took the form of a top-down imposition of predetermined programs.

Nowhere was the gap between the democratic ideal and the authoritarian practice of modernization exemplified more dramatically than in the Strategic Hamlet Program in Vietnam.<sup>84</sup> In the early 1960s, nervous about the expansion of the guerilla force in Vietnam but not quite ready to make a troop commitment, the Kennedy administration engaged in a massive resettlement project. Determining that “an apathetic rural population is a vulnerable target for communist political activity,” the United States helped the South Vietnamese government of Ngo Dinh Diem organize the scattered rural population into “strategic hamlets,” settlements protected by ditches, a fence of barbed wire, and bamboo stakes. While the immediate goal of strategic hamlets was to physically separate the rural population from the National Liberation Front (NLF; called as the “Vietcong” by Diem and the United States), thereby cutting off the local resources of the NLF, the ambition of American policy makers ran deeper. They hoped to create in the rural population a new sense of affinity with the South Vietnamese government and, moreover, to instill in dislocated people a new political culture. As Rufus Philips of the Agency for International Development remarked, “the central idea of the Strategic Hamlet Program ... is that through the institutions of their own self-government, the people will be given a political stake in their own hamlets,

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<sup>84</sup> My discussion of the Strategic Hamlet Program in this paragraph draws on the following works: Michael Latham’s *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and “Nation Building” in the Kennedy Era* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 151-207; Philip E. Catton, “Counter-Insurgency and Nation Building: The Strategic Hamlet Program in South Vietnam, 1961-1963,” *International History Review* 21(4) (1999): 918-940; D. Michael Shafer, *Deadly Paradigms: The Failure of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).

and ultimately in the national government, worth defending.”<sup>85</sup> But if the hamlet residents were allowed to elect their chiefs and councils through the “civic action team,” they were also managed with identification cards, forced to build homes and fortifications, and participated in military drills, all the while surrounded by watchtowers. Firmly convinced of the positive force of modernization, many policy-makers failed or refused to reconsider the basic assumptions behind the Strategic Hamlet Program. Whenever problems were reported from the field, they blamed the Vietnamese government’s poor execution of an essentially sound program. What was ruled out, until the quick dissolution of the strategic hamlets following Diem’s assassination in 1963, was the possibility that the “democratic” organizations and procedures in the hamlets were but an instrument of the central government (or foreign power) for the imposition of predetermined programs—an instrument that was *inherently* unable to inspire affective attachment or cultivate a “civic culture.”

The catastrophic failure in Vietnam shattered modernization theory, or at least it seemed that way for a while. Its pieces, however, would prove to be remarkably resilient and reappear in various permutations. As we will see in the following chapter, instrumental democracy, too, would persist and evolve in the late twentieth century, in theory as well as in practice. The story of the evolution of instrumental democracy begins with an unexpected turn of history: many “unprepared” countries suddenly started moving toward democracy. To this swirl of history we now turn.

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<sup>85</sup> Cited in Latham, *Modernization as Ideology*, 186.

## CHAPTER 4

### **The Evolution of Instrumental Democracy: Third Wave Democratization and Its Pathologies**

“What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of postwar history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.”

--Francis Fukuyama (1989)<sup>1</sup>

“[In post-transition Chile] politics no longer exists as a struggle between true alternatives, as historicity (*historicidad*), but exists merely as a history (*historia*) of small variations, adjustments, changes in aspects of society that do not compromise the global dynamics [of capitalism].”

--Tomás Moulián (1997)<sup>2</sup>

In the previous two chapters I examined how instrumental democracy emerged from Cold War imperatives, was codified by behavioralism and rational choice theory, and became an integral part of the idea of modernization to be exported around the globe. As instrumental democracy evolves in the late twentieth century, the demos (and its dialectical relationship with the common good) dissolves into self-interested individuals supposedly free yet ultimately managed by the state apparatus and market principles—forces that become increasingly technocratic and undemocratic. This chapter traces this process. In keeping with my project’s underlying argument that history and theory are mutually constitutive, I juxtapose the historical unfolding of

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History?” *The National Interest* 16 (Summer 1989), 4.

<sup>2</sup> Tomás Moulián, *Chile actual: Anatomía de un mito* (Santiago: ARCIS Universidad, 1997), 39. All translations in this chapter are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

instrumental democracy with conceptual articulations of that unfolding. This approach is especially fitting when it comes to the main subjects of my analysis in this chapter—the Third World and the Third Wave—which were discourses as much as they were historical events. As noted in the Introduction, the term “Third World” describes revolutionary movements for self-rule in post-colonial societies in the 1950s, whereas the term “Third Wave” refers to the global spread of democracy that occurred between 1974 and 1990. In many ways, the Third World and the Third Wave, as projects as well as concepts, were a response to modernization theory discussed in the previous chapter: the former was an attempt to envision an alternative to the path set by modernization theory (as well as by historical materialism), the latter an effort to address the failure of modernization theory as a conceptual as well as a foreign policy tool.

I contend in this chapter that the Third Wave of democratization is haunted by the evolution of instrumental democracy. Focusing on the fact that the global spread of democracy occurred precisely when the Cold War was mutating into a new world order which was neoliberal globalization, I analyze the transition from the Third World to the Third Wave as the ascendance of one form of political life conforming to that new order and the decline of another form of political life. I develop my argument by interrogating the underlying assumptions of the “Third Wave discourse,” which refers to some of the major works of democratization scholarship in its earlier phase. In particular, I focus on two related assumptions of the Third Wave discourse. First, while agreeing with modernization theory that the procedural conception of democracy inspired by Schumpeter and Dahl is *the* definition of democracy,<sup>3</sup> the

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<sup>3</sup> Huntington, for instance, declared that by 1970 “Schumpeter had won” the debate over the meaning of democracy, asserting that a country is democratic as long as there are contested elections based on universal franchise and the civil and political freedoms to speak, publish, assemble, and organize “that are necessary to political debate and the conduct of electoral campaigns.” Samuel Huntington, *The*

Third Wave discourse adopts a “dynamic model” by placing particular emphasis on the *activities* of elites. As Dunkwart Rustow succinctly stated in his seminal 1970 article, the creation of democracy is now understood as a “deliberate decision on the part of political leaders.”<sup>4</sup> Second, since democratization is viewed as a strictly political event involving competition among the elite, socioeconomic issues drop out in the Third Wave discourse. In their influential early study of democratization, Larry Diamond, Juan Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset asserted that democracy “signif[ies] a political system, separate and apart from the economic and social system ... Indeed, a distinctive aspect of our approach is to insist that issues of so-called economic and social democracy be separated from the question of governmental structure.”<sup>5</sup> Together, these assumptions constitute an outright rejection of modernization theory’s functionalist model in which grand socioeconomic and cultural undercurrents slowly give rise to democracy.

As I will elaborate in the first section, these two assumptions are intertwined with the reconfiguration of the world order—and the interests of the United States as the hegemon in that order—in the late twentieth century. The Rustovian “negotiations approach” to democratization received huge attention partly because it came at a time when US foreign policy, guided by modernization theory, seemed not only morally unpalatable but pragmatically incapable of stabilizing the Third World. Anti-

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*Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 6-7.

<sup>4</sup> Dunkwart A. Rustow, “Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model,” *Comparative Politics* 2(3) (1970): 337-363, 355. See also Guillermo A. O’Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, 1986), 8; Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 10-12.

<sup>5</sup> Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, *Democracy in Developing Countries*, 4 vols. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner and the National Endowment for Democracy, 1989), vol. 4, xvi, 44-47. See also Giuseppe Di Palma, *To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transitions* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), 97-102; Samuel Huntington, “The Modest Meaning of Democracy,” in *Democracy in the Americas: Stopping the Pendulum*, ed. Robert A. Pastor (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1989), 11-28.

Communist authoritarian regimes Washington supported in the postwar era became increasingly unsustainable as capitalism was undergoing a major transformation in the 1970s, and both scholars and policymakers needed a new framework to address this change. What is distinctive about the Third Wave discourse is that it portrayed democratization essentially as an unthreatening event. According to this approach, the Third Wave, in stark contrast to the Third World, neither fundamentally challenged nor drastically altered the dominant socioeconomic system. This, in part, reflects scholars' understandably welcoming disposition toward democratization and their eagerness to put the Third Wave in favorable light. But in doing so, they ended up paying more attention to acquiescent aspects of the Third Wave, while neglecting more radical voices that opened up political space under authoritarianism and drove the struggle for democracy long before political elites were able to "negotiate." As a result, the Third Wave discourse blinds us to the possibility that Third Wave democratization might be not so much a realization as a frustration of popular aspirations—a troubling materialization of Huntington's call for "a greater degree of moderation in democracy" discussed in Chapter 2. The Third Wave discourse's elitist and purely political understanding of democracy unwittingly participates in the marked trend of the late twentieth century to domesticate democracy in compliance with the terms of neoliberal globalization.

I unpack my argument by examining democratization in Chile and South Korea. As discussed in the Introduction, Chile and South Korea are two of the exemplary cases of the double development of formal democracy and capitalism and provide particularly useful venues for exploring the intertwinement of democracy and neoliberalism in the late twentieth century. The experiences of Chile and South Korea suggest that we can come to terms with democratic disaffection plaguing both countries' post-transition politics only when we consider aspects of democratization



ignored by the Third World discourse. Democratic disaffection occurs not *despite* the adoption of democratic institutions but *because* democratic institutionalization was overshadowed by elite-centric politics and the neoliberal restructuring of social relations. As I will demonstrate, formal democratization in Chile and South Korea produced a variant of instrumental democracy at odds with the popular vision of democracy formed, if incompletely, during the anti-authoritarian struggle. This disjuncture between the *vision* of democracy during the struggle for democracy and the *reality* of democracy after the transition, I contend, is the major factor that accounts for the curious transformation of democratic aspirations into democratic disaffection observed in Chile and South Korea. Major elements of instrumental democracy were already in preliminary formation in the authoritarian regimes, and found its way into the institutions, discourse, and practice of democracy in the post-transition era.

In addition to reiterating my point in the Introduction that my account in this Chapter does not establish causal relations between instrumental democracy and democratic disaffection but aims to illustrate and analyze systematic tendencies of instrumental democracy to produce democratic disaffection in post-transition Chile and South Korea, I want to note that my critical investigation into the two countries' democratization does not take issue with a *prima facie* claim that minimal democracy is more desirable than authoritarianism. As Nancy Bermeo has starkly put it, "if you are given to dissent, the difference between democracy and dictatorship can literally be the difference between life and death."<sup>6</sup> My aim, here as well as throughout my project, is to make sense of the gap between democratic institutions and practice that many political elites and scholars predicted would narrow over time. If this gap persists and deepens as it does in Chile and South Korea, it threatens the very

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<sup>6</sup> Nancy Bermeo, "Rethinking Regime Change," *Comparative Politics* 22(3) (1990), 374.

legitimacy and operation of minimal democracy. Those who are committed to minimal democracy should therefore take this gap seriously.

This chapter is divided into three parts. First, I examine the fall of the Third World and the rise of the Third Wave in light of geopolitical and socioeconomic change in the late twentieth century. Second, I contrast the concept of democracy put forward by the authoritarian regime with its counter-discourse, namely, the vision of democracy formed during the struggle against authoritarianism. I argue that this counter-discourse was centered on the recovery of politics that had been regimented and foreclosed by the authoritarian regimes. I develop this argument by focusing on the concepts *el pueblo* and *minjung*—both meaning “the (marginalized) people”—as an aspired democratic subjectivity. Third, I investigate how that subjectivity was systematically marginalized in post-transition Chile and South Korea. I conclude by briefly discussing how the experience of the Third Wave is being incorporated into democracy promotion as a major US foreign policy initiative in the post-Cold War era.

### **From the Third World to the Third Wave: The Changing World Order in the Late Twentieth Century**

As soon as we expand the historical scope of our perspective, we are presented with a puzzle. Why did the United States welcome and celebrate the Third Wave of democratization? This question might sound odd. To be sure, Woodrow Wilson spoke about making the world “safe for democracy” as early as in 1917. In practice, however, democracy-promotion was hardly at the center of US foreign policy in the postwar years. The United States perceived popular demands for self-rule, which erupted in many post-colonial societies after World War II, generally as a threat and violently

repressed them.<sup>7</sup> The United States used covert operations to support coups against democratically elected governments in Iran (1953), Guatemala (1954), and Chile (1973), and tried to do so in Indonesia (1958). Other operations to “preserve freedom and the world order,” as many policy-makers at the time liked to say, were executed in Greece (1947-49), Philippines (1948-1954), Taiwan (1950), Korea (1950-53), Panama (1958), Lebanon (1958), Congo (1960-65), Vietnam (1960-75), Cuba (1961), and Laos (1962).<sup>8</sup> Why, then, did the United States *not* intervene in the Third Wave? Why did the United States suddenly decide to assume the role of democracy-promoter in the 1980s? Had democracy somehow become “safe” for freedom and the world order?

To address these questions, we need to approach both the Third World and the Third Wave within a broader historical context. After all, such terms as the Third World and the Third Wave—like the Cold War—did not even exist before World War II.

The term Third World gained prominence after the 1955 Asian-African conference in Bandung, Indonesia—one of the biggest and most influential gatherings of Third World leaders held in the postwar era.<sup>9</sup> In his opening speech, Indonesia’s president Sukarno declared that “we are living in a world of fear”: “The life of man today is corroded and made bitter by fear. Fear of the future, fear of the hydrogen

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<sup>7</sup> Of course, the Soviet Union’s intervention in the Third World in the postwar era was no less ruthless. See, for example, Robert H. Donaldson ed., *The Soviet Union in the Third World: Successes and Failures* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1981). I am focusing on the United States’ relation to the Third World in order to compare it to its promotion of Third Wave democratization in the subsequent period.

<sup>8</sup> Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), esp. chap. 4. See also William Blum, *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1995).

<sup>9</sup> The African-American writer Richard Wright, who attended the conference, described his incredulous excitement of encountering the news of the Bandung conference: “The despised, the insulted, the hurt, the dispossessed—in short, the underdogs of the human race were meeting. Here were class and racial and religious consciousness on a global scale ... What had these nations in common? Nothing, it seemed to me, but what their past relationship to the Western world had made them feel. This meeting of the rejected was in itself a kind of judgment upon that Western world!” Richard Wright, *The Color Curtain: A Report on the Bandung Conference* (Cleveland and New York: World Publishing Company, 1956), 12.

bomb, fear of ideologies. Perhaps this fear is a greater danger than the danger itself, because it is fear which drives men to act foolishly, to act thoughtlessly, to act dangerously.”<sup>10</sup> With this insightful critique of the Cold War, Sukarno made it clear that the “first intercontinental conference of coloured people in the history of mankind” aimed to overcome such a fearful world (39). In the woeful state caused by the Cold War, Sukarno asserted, people were “grasp[ing] for safety and morality” and that was why “now more than at any other moment in the history of the world” politics should be based upon “the highest code of morality” centered on “the well-being of mankind” (42-43). Formerly colonized countries, now united under the name of the Third World, were in a privileged position to advance this mission because they had experienced colonialism “in all its ruthlessness” and seen “the immense human wastage [colonialism] causes, the poverty it causes, and the heritage it leaves behind.” In this respect, Sukarno concluded, what united twenty-nine countries was not religion, race, or culture, but “a common detestation of colonialism in whatever form it appears” (43). And according to Sukarno, colonialism was well and alive in a supposedly post-colonial world, as it “has also its modern dress, in the form of economic control, intellectual control, actual physical control by a small but alien community within a nation” (44).

As Sukarno’s last remark reveals, Third World leaders were keenly aware that their struggle to claim sovereignty and recover nationalist culture was inextricably intertwined with their economic underdevelopment and dependence inherited from the colonial era. Given this recognition, it is not surprising that the Third World was skeptical of the *laissez-faire* principles underlying the postwar international economic system. Reinforced by the so-called “Bretton Woods institutions” led by the United

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<sup>10</sup> George McTuran Kahin, ed., *The Asian-African Conference: Bandung, Indonesia, April 1955* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1956), 43. Subsequent references cited parenthetically.

States—the IMF, the World Bank, and the GATT (though the GATT was neither an independent institution nor founded at Bretton Woods)—the principles of “free trade” and “free enterprise” mean, in practical terms, the removal of all barriers to international trade and of governmental interventions in the domestic economy. Such an open international economy worked in favor of the United States that urgently needed avenues for export that could absorb its wartime overproduction and access to foreign raw material in order to ensure further economic growth. From the viewpoint of the Third World, however, the Bretton Woods regime meant but a recreation of the prewar international division of labor that would put them at a systematic disadvantage. Aid programs such as the Marshall Plan that helped reestablish industries in Western Europe never came to Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Saying that there was no planned aid to Latin America, Marshall remarked that the benefits of American aid to Europe would “trickle down” to the poor of Latin America when European demand for Latin American agricultural goods increased, if, of course, Latin America accepted free trade principles.<sup>11</sup> But even if we set aside the accuracy of the trickle-down theory, such a dependent model of economic development was precisely what Third World countries wanted to overcome. Because the Bretton Woods system was biased against raw materials in favor of industrial products, “free trade” between developed and underdeveloped countries had the effect of not only increasing their income gap but locking the latter in raw material production with no prospect for industrialization of their own. It is no coincidence that the second Asian-African conference (Cairo, 1962) called for a United Nations trade conference outside the GATT, which, with the support of Latin American and Eastern European states, led to the creation of the United Nation Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 1964. The Third

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<sup>11</sup> *Economist*, May 8, 1948, 782; quoted in Craig Murphy, *The Emergence of the NIEO Ideology* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 27.

World's moral and political critique of the Cold War and their challenge to unfettered capitalism were parts of the same project.

The Third World's search for alternatives came as a threat to the United States. In the Cold War context, the Third World was viewed less as fellow nations than as the object of domination and control supposed to belong to one or the other side of the Cold War. As the NSC 68, a strategic document laying out the basic US foreign policy agenda during the Cold War, stated, "[t]he assault on free institutions is world-wide now, and in the context of the present polarization of power a defeat of free institutions anywhere is a defeat everywhere."<sup>12</sup> This dichotomous view led the United States to reduce all deviations from full-fledged capitalism to a move toward Soviet-style communism, and almost forced her to repeatedly intervene in the Third World as it did throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

Cold War binaries and interventionism pervaded American Third World policy up until the late 1970s. Its influence is conspicuous, for example, in Jeane Kirkpatrick's notorious article, "Dictatorships and Double Standards," published in 1979 in *Commentary*. In this acrid denunciation of the Carter administration's foreign policy, Kirkpatrick asserted that Washington "lost" Iran and Nicaragua to revolutionary forces, undermining US interests. According to her, it was a gravely misguided decision not to protect "an established autocracy with a record of friendship with the U.S." from the attacks by "insurgents, some of whose leaders have long ties to the Communist movement."<sup>13</sup> From Kirkpatrick's point of view, the Carter administration, and liberals more generally, misinterpreted insurgency in the Third World as "evidence of widespread popular discontent and a will to democracy" while

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<sup>12</sup> "NSC 68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security," April 14, 1950, in *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1950 (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of State), vol. 1, 234-292, 240.

<sup>13</sup> Jeane Kirkpatrick, "Dictatorships and Double Standards," *Commentary* 68(5) (1979), 34-45, 35. Subsequent references cited parenthetically.

in fact such insurgency was dominated by radicals presumably sponsored by the Soviet Union and Cuba (38). Liberals were “duped” into supporting these insurgencies because insurgents invoked the symbols and values of democracy, but Marxist revolutionaries were actually “totalitarians” who would install a government no less repressive in its nature and openly hostile to the United States (42). She chided the Carter administration for failing to recognize “the nature of traditional versus revolutionary autocracies and the relation of each to the American national interest” (44).

The focus of Kirkpatrick’s distinction between traditional and revolutionary autocracies was whether or not the regime was favorably disposed to the United States. But she also made a theoretically suggestive claim that sheds light on our discussion of the Third Wave. She argued that, as compared to their revolutionary counterparts, traditional autocracies have more potential for democratization and liberalization, as they “permit limited contestation and participation” (44). But how, exactly, limited is that contestation and participation? We get a hint when Kirkpatrick approvingly observed that traditional autocracies “leave in place existing allocations of wealth, power, status, and other resources.” Although she acknowledged that such a strong bias toward the status quo “favor[s] an affluent few and maintain masses in poverty,” she was not particularly worried. “Because the miseries of traditional life are familiar, they are bearable to ordinary people who, growing up in the society, learn to cope, as children born to untouchables in India acquire the skills and attitudes necessary for survival in the miserable roles they are destined to fill” (44). Thus “limited contestation and participation,” which is granted by traditional autocracies and supposed to evolve into democracy, neither challenges the “existing allocations of wealth, power, status, and other resources” nor addresses “the miseries of traditional life.” Any attempt to do so is labeled “revolutionary” and presumed to be antithetical

to democratization. The idea that democracy can and should be contained by a system that benefits a few while leaving the majority in the state of misery is oxymoronic. If that absurdity did not occur to Kirkpatrick, it testifies to a stranglehold that the circumscribed and instrumentalized concept of democracy—the origins and logics of which we examined in previous chapters—held on postwar minds. And it was a stranglehold with real consequences. When democracy was perceived to dismantle the existing socioeconomic structure, as in the case of the Allende government in Chile, the United States was not welcoming at all.<sup>14</sup>

Given that the United States supported only “moderate democratization,” namely, democratization that was limited in its scope of participation and contestation, the Reagan administration’s democracy promotion policy seems less a departure from than a modified continuation of the Kirkpatrick doctrine.<sup>15</sup> Insofar as the Kirkpatrick doctrine was an expression of hard-nosed realism that proclaimed to consider nothing but national interest, we have reason to suspect that the United States’ turn to democracy promotion originated not from a genuine shift in her value orientation but from a broader process through which she recalculated her interest in response to important changes in the late twentieth century.

One of the more immediate changes was the declining legitimacy of military operations as a foreign policy option. Vietnam, of course, was crucial to this change. And the “loss” of Nicaragua resulted in a fundamental reconceptualization of American foreign policy, albeit in a different way than was suggested by Kirkpatrick.

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<sup>14</sup> On US intelligence activities in Chile, including its involvement in the coup against the Allende government, see US Senate, *Covert Action in Chile, 1963-1973* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1975). See also James Petras and Morris Morley, *The United States and Chile: Imperialism and the Overthrow of the Allende Government* (New York: Monthly Review, 1975).

<sup>15</sup> The beginning of this policy shift is marked by Reagan’s speech before the British parliament in 1982, in which he announced: “If the rest of this century is to witness the gradual growth of freedom and democratic ideals, we must take actions to assist the campaign for democracy.” Ronald Reagan, “Address to Members of the British Parliament,” June 8, 1982, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Ronald Reagan, 1982*, 742-748, 745.



As Carl Gershman, the president of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a new US foreign policy agency created in 1983, said: “The Nicaraguan experience shattered both sides of the argument over U.S. attitudes towards friendly Third World autocrats. On one hand, conservative view that such regimes are a bulwark against communism seemed a good deal less compelling after the Sandinistas took over from Somoza. The Nicaraguan events seemed to bear out a different analysis, namely, that right-wing authoritarianism is fertile soil for the growth of Marxist-Leninist organizations ... On the other hand, the liberal side of the argument—that policy sufficed in simply seeking the removal of authoritarian dictatorships, as communist movements could be defeated by denying them this easy target—fared no better. As long as the Communists were the most determined alternative to Somoza, the downfall of the dictatorship would enable them to take power.”<sup>16</sup> As struggles for democracy were gaining momentum in many corners of the world in the early 1980s, helping the moderates lead and deradicalize those struggles began to appear, for both conservatives and liberals, not only a morally superior but a more effective strategy to contain the expansion of Communism.

Moreover, the United States was in the process of reconfiguring her economic interest within a new global capitalism that began to materialize in the early 1970s. The most notable change was the rise of transnational finance capital as the dominant force in the international economic system. By the mid-1970s the volume of purely monetary transactions carried out in offshore money markets already exceeded the values of world trade many times over, and the trend toward the expansion of finance capital only accelerated in the subsequent period.<sup>17</sup> And this change was not purely

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<sup>16</sup> Carl Gershman, “The United States and the World Democratic Revolution,” *Washington Quarterly* (Winter 1989), 127-139, 130.

<sup>17</sup> Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Time*, new and updated ed. (London: Verso, 2010 [1994]), 308.

quantitative. Once the United States abandoned fixed exchange rates in 1971 and deregulated banking in the late 1970s, the public control of capital flows virtually ceased to exist. The rising power of finance capital, then, effected a set of profound changes. The focus of economic policy shifted from full employment to inflation control via higher interest rates (which, along with deregulation, lured transnational financial capital from London back to New York). Regulatory measures and public control of industries and services were abandoned in favor of liberalization and privatization in order to facilitate investment by finance capital at the cost of extreme economic volatility. To be sure, these changes occurred unevenly and over time, but they took shape and emerged throughout the 1980s and the 1990s as the predominant economic doctrine—which came to be called “neoliberalism.”

As I will discuss in the following sections, the ascendance of neoliberalism was hardly a change in the economic realm alone. It marked a radical break from the New Deal as a social vision that, in its ideal realization, links the public control of capital, social welfare policies, and democratic politics. And this broader transformation quickly spread around the globe, in part because the neoliberal phase of global capitalism created an environment in which economic measures became a highly effective tool of disciplining Third World countries. Beginning in the 1970s, many Third World countries started amassing an unprecedented level of debt. A sudden surplus of credit produced by OPEC money and slack demand in the stagnating North flowed into Third World countries. At the same time, the global economic recession depressed commodity price while inflating interest rates in creditor countries. In effect, already sizable debts doubled and Third World countries were forced to keep borrowing more money to service their debts. So when high international liquidity was no longer available in the 1980s, heavily indebted Third World countries had to face periodic economic crises, if not collapses. Through this

process, Third World countries became at once vulnerable to transnational capital and dependent on multilateral lending institutions such as the IMF—a trend that would only accelerate in the following decades.

In the neoliberal phase of capitalism, democracy appears more attractive to the United States for a number of reasons. For one thing, the cost of supporting the authoritarian regime is higher in the neoliberal era. The higher economic volatility caused by neoliberalism makes it difficult for authoritarianism to compensate for its lack of legitimacy with stable economic performance. In a society marked by periodic economic crises, a legitimizing mechanism, such as elections, that allows people to express their discontent and anger is preferable to an irreplaceable figure at the apex of the power structure for the purpose of absorbing social tension. At the same time, the increased dependence of the Third World on the global capitalist regime means there are now mechanisms other than domestic dictatorships (e.g., conditionality clauses of the IMF) that can reinforce the existing socioeconomic framework and the allocation of power within that framework. As we will see, Third Wave governments' vulnerable and dependent position in the neoliberal world order severely constrains their ability to respond to popular demands. In this respect, it is indicative that the Reagan administration's democracy promotion policy was accompanied by an aggressive rejection of the Third World's attempts to reform the global economic system. At a summit with selected Third World leaders in 1981, Reagan unilaterally declared the death of the New International Economic Order (NIEO), a set of reform agendas proposed by Third World countries and adopted, though without the consent of the United States and a few other advanced countries, at the UN General Assembly in 1974.

Seen in this light, the global spread of democracy in the late twentieth century was not simply individual countries' departure from authoritarianism. Rather, the fall

of the Third World and the rise of the Third Wave were two sides of the same event symptomatic of a slow yet definitive shift in the global order from the Cold War to neoliberal globalization. It is, then, not surprising that the nature of Third Wave democratization was heavily influenced by structural constraints inherent in the new global system. And those constraints, as I will now demonstrate in the contexts of Chile and South Korea, tended to realize tendencies toward instrumental democracy.

### **Contending Visions of Democracy: Authoritarianism and Democratization in Chile and South Korea**

In Chile and South Korea, what people demanded under the name of democracy was not the adoption of a set of institutions—not that alone. Institutional change, of course, was certainly significant, but not as an isolated goal but as a symbol of deeper social, economic, and cultural transformations. In the actual struggle for democracy, institutional change and a more fundamental social transformation were understood to constitute an integrated whole. Separating out these two aspects of democratization and focusing exclusively on one of them while bracketing the other, as the Third Wave discourse does, ignore this crucial fact and keep us from understanding the relationship between purely institutional and more substantial democratization. To appreciate this point, we first need to examine how the vision of democracy was formed as a counter-discourse to the authoritarian regime's view of democracy.

Authoritarian rule, despite its reliance on force, is nonetheless not exempt from the need to legitimize its existence. From this need arises a contradiction that creates instability within the authoritarian regime. Guillermo O'Donnell insightfully analyzes this dynamic in his influential account of "bureaucratic authoritarianism." According to O'Donnell, bureaucratic authoritarianism is both a "system of political exclusion"

that imposes a particular type of order on society and a “system of economic exclusion” that “promotes a pattern of capital accumulation which is highly skewed toward benefiting the large oligopolistic units of private capital and some state institutions.”<sup>18</sup> The authoritarian regime justifies this exclusion in a double-sided move: it sets out general goals such as modernization that the nation as a whole ought to pursue and, at the same time, renders parts of the nation—e.g., the popular sector, the working class, dissidents intellectuals—as an obstacle to be removed in order to attain those goals. As O’Donnell puts it, bureaucratic authoritarianism “appears as if placed before a sick nation ... contaminated by innumerable internal enemies.”<sup>19</sup> Bureaucratic authoritarianism then claims to “cure” the nation through supposedly neutral, technical, and rational measures and, most important for our purposes, dismisses any attempt to politicize social issues as impatient, irrational, and dangerous. This move, however, contains a contradiction insofar as it oscillates between generality (of national goals) and particularity (of beneficiaries of nationalist projects). As it excludes and represses more people, the authoritarian regime widens the gap between the general and the particular components of its legitimation mechanism, making its inherent contradiction increasingly unsustainable.

In Chile, the authoritarian vision was clearly stated in the Declaration of Principles of the Chilean Government (*Declaración de principios del Gobierno de Chile*, hereafter Declaration), published by the junta in 1974 after its violent overthrow of the Allende government in the previous year. In it, the junta proclaimed to embrace “an emphatically nationalistic point of view” and to hold “national unity as its most

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<sup>18</sup> Guillermo O’Donnell, “Tensions in the Bureaucratic-Authoritarian State,” in *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America*, ed. David Collier (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), 292-293.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 293.

cherished objective.”<sup>20</sup> As noted above, however, the authoritarian regime’s appeal to generality (i.e., the nation) was predicated upon carving out and then excluding parts of the nation. The junta was not coy about who was excluded from the nation it was trying to rebuild. “Chile must be a land of property owners, not a country of proletarians ... Chile is not neutral in her relationship to Marxism ... The present Government neither fears nor hesitates to declare itself anti-Marxist.” While “[t]he right to dissent must be preserved,” the junta stated, “the experience of recent years shows the need to subject it to acceptable limits” (31, 35). The targeting of the workers and the Marxists is predictable given that they were the political base of the Allende government. More suggestive is the pathology that the junta associated with Marxism. In the Declaration, Marxism was sometimes presented as a totalitarian doctrine in a typical Cold War fashion, but more frequently as the force to disrupt national unity by stirring up antagonism between classes—in other words, less as an *affirmation* than as a *negation* of totality. Here, it is important to note that what was criticized was not just class conflict but the very notion of conflict as such. The junta called upon all Chileans “to surmount former divisions and factions” and “become part of th[e] great national unity movement” (37). What this amounted to was a wholesale rejection of the undertaking of politics which is nothing but a productive negotiation of conflicts and differences (labeled “divisions and factions” by the junta).

The junta’s rejection of politics is most evident in its self-assigned “historical mission” of “giving Chile new governmental institutions to provide our democracy with solid stability, cleansing our democratic system from the vices that facilitated its destruction.” The key principle of this “new institutionality” was the “decentralization

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<sup>20</sup> Junta de Gobierno, *Declaración de principios del Gobierno de Chile* (Santiago, 1974), 32. This document was published in Spanish, English, French, and German. In most cases I used the English version. When I modified translation, I provided original Spanish. Subsequent references cited in the text parenthetically.

of power” that “would enabl[e] the country to advance toward a technocratic society with true social participation” (35). The emphasis of this institutional reform lay in the “independence” of interest groups and especially trade unions (“*gremios*”)—traditionally formidable political forces in the Chilean political system—which the Declaration revealingly equated with “depoliticization (*despoliticización*).”<sup>21</sup> This curious equation of independence and depoliticization was a key element of Chilean neoconservatism (“*gremialismo*”), which began as a student movement at the Catholic University in the mid-1960s and became a major force in the Pinochet regime.<sup>22</sup> In the language of Jaime Guzmán, the leader of *gremialismo*, the Declaration pronounced that social unions “may become authentic means of *social* [i.e., nonpolitical] participation” only by blocking the influence of political parties (37, emphasis added). More specifically, by the concept depoliticization the Declaration meant that union activities must be exercised “responsibly and thoughtfully” with the understanding that “the state must harmonize the reasonable aspirations of each sector with the national interest” and that unions must become “vehicles contributing technically to ... governmental decisions” (38). Ultimately, the junta strived to “transform[] Chile into a technocratic society where informed opinion shall prevail over slogans” (38). In setting out these goals, the junta seemed aware that this “end of politics” cannot emerge naturally or voluntarily, as it pledged to “energetically apply the principle of authority and drastically punish any outburst of disorder or anarchy” (33).

It was around the rejection of politics that neoliberal economists (known as the “Chicago Boys”<sup>23</sup>), another major governing faction of the Pinochet regime,

<sup>21</sup> Suggestively, the official document translates *despoliticización* as “freedom from politics,” indicating a purely economic view of freedom that would dominate Chile and elsewhere in the years to come.

<sup>22</sup> For an overview of the *gremialista* movement, see Marcelo Pollack, *The New Right in Chile, 1973-1997* (London: Macmillan, 1999), 30-38.

<sup>23</sup> The term “Chicago Boys” refers to the fact that many economists who served in the Pinochet regime received their postgraduate degrees from the University of Chicago. For a thorough discussion of the Chicago Boys, see Juan Gabriel Valdéz, *Pinochet’s Economists: The Chicago School in Chile*

converged with the *gremialistas*.<sup>24</sup> Although their individualist and modernist dispositions did not sit well with the *gremialistas*' corporatist and traditionalist values, the Chicago Boys, like the military, perceived politics to be inefficient and corrupt. They too understood freedom in depoliticized terms, if only with a clearer alternative—economic freedom manifested and realized solely in a “free market.” Because they viewed the market as a neutral and technical mechanism to be managed by experts like themselves, the Chicago Boys eagerly agreed with, and played a major role in realizing, the vision of a technocratic society proclaimed in the Declaration.<sup>25</sup> In fact, it was the Chicago Boys that formulated a sophisticated theory of interdependence between authoritarianism and neoliberalism. Drawing on the work of Hayek, they criticized democratic politics for being swayed by such organized groups as political parties and labor unions at the expense of individual interests. According to the neoliberals, those collectivities distort and obstruct the proper working of the market and should be removed in order to guarantee individual freedom. This, in turn,

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(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); see also Glen Biglaiser, “The Internationalization of Economics in Latin America,” *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 50(2) (2002): 269-286.

<sup>24</sup> On the close personal links between the neoliberals and the *gremialistas*, see Carlos Huneeus, “Technocrats and Politicians in an Authoritarian Regime: The ‘ODEPLAN Boys’ and the ‘Gremialists’ in Pinochet’s Chile,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 32(2) (2000): 461-501.

<sup>25</sup> To be sure, technocratic elements have always been present in Chilean politics. Economic planning by technocrats was pursued, if unsuccessfully, by the Allende government, as exemplified in an exaggerated fashion by “Project Cybersyn” that intended to manage the economy through a computerized center in Santiago that would process “real time” economic data coming via telex from several industries over the country. However, political participation was not seen as antithetical to the technocratic management of the economy as it was in the Pinochet regime; rather, participation was integrated as an important part of that management. Gonzalo Martner, the director of the Office of National Planning (*Oficina Nacional de Planificación*, ODEPLAN) in the Allende government, is emphatic about this point. “An important aim is that planning should cease to be a superstructure and becomes the basis of the system, and to this end an agreement is being drawn up with the Central Trades Union Confederation (CUT [*Central Única de Trabajadores*]) to establish a joint ODEPLAN-CUT Commission ... This commission will propose operational models for planning mechanisms with full worker participation for each enterprise. The Popular Unity government believes that planning is a way of enhancing participation, enabling discussion on and participation in the substantive issues of development policies.” Gonzalo Martner, “The Popular Unity Government’s Efforts at Planning,” in *The Chilean Road to Socialism: Proceedings of an ODEPLAN-IDS Round Table, March 1972*, ed. J. Ann Zammit (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1973), 71-73. On Project Cybersyn, see Eden Medina, “Designing Freedom, Regulating a Nation: Socialist Cybernetics in Allende’s Chile,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 38(3) (2006): 571-606.



calls for an extremely strong central power that is able to dismantle and continue to hold in check those organized social groups. As Castro de Sergio, a leading Chicago Boy and longtime finance minister in the Pinochet regime, bluntly put it, “A person’s actual freedom ... can only be ensured through an authoritarian regime that exercises power by implementing equal rules for everyone.”<sup>26</sup> Based on this idea, Pablo Baraona, another key neoliberal and economic minister in the military government, went so far as to envision a “new democracy” that the Pinochet regime would create. He argued that

“the new democracy ... will have to be *authoritarian*, in the sense that the rules needed for the system’s stability cannot be subject to political processes, and that compliance with these measures can be guaranteed by our armed forces ... [It will also have to be] *technified*, in the sense that political bodies should not decide technical issues but restrict themselves to evaluating results, leaving to the technocracy the responsibility of using logical procedures for resolving problems or offering alternative solutions.”<sup>27</sup>

Baraona’s remark reveals that Pinochet’s neoliberal authoritarianism constitutes not simply a *rejection* but a *redefinition* of democracy. And at the center of that redefinition is reduction of democracy to an instrument that can be appropriated by an external authority to serve purposes beyond the reach of democratic politics. While announcing his plans to extend neoliberalism into seven areas of policy (labor, social security, education, health, justice, agriculture, and regional administration) in his September 11, 1979 speech, Pinochet asserted that democracy was “not an end in itself” but only a means to build a truly “free society.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Valdéz, *Pinochet’s Economists*, 30.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 31.

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela, *A Nation of Enemies: Chile Under Pinochet* (New York and London: Norton, 1991), 191.

The convergence of the gremialistas and the neoliberals under Pinochet illustrates depoliticization and the neoliberal restructuring of the economy as mutually reinforcing aspects of instrumental democracy. The diverging fate of two important political actors—business groups and organized labor—under the Pinochet regime clearly demonstrates this point. Big business groups (*grupos económicos*) benefited greatly from the privatization of public enterprises, which occurred in remarkably favorable terms (e.g., low sale price, subsidies), and acquired excessively concentrated economic power. At the end of 1978 six business groups controlled 54% of the assets of the 250 largest private enterprises in Chile, and five of those groups doubled their assets between 1978 and 1980.<sup>29</sup> This trend was even more pronounced in the financial sector. By 1982 Cruzat and Vial groups, two biggest business groups in Chile, controlled 42 percent of all banking capital and 60 percent of all credit.<sup>30</sup> In sharp contrast, organized labor was severely suppressed in a supposedly free economy. As noted above, the military regime tried to demobilize workers as soon as it came into power. Decree Laws no. 32 of October 4, 1973, for example, made dismissal of workers extremely easy, effecting a “wholesale authorization to fire union leaders and militants.”<sup>31</sup> The notorious Labor Plan (*Plan Laboral*) of 1979 epitomized the military regime’s repressive labor policies throughout the 1970s which would persist even after the transition.<sup>32</sup> The Labor Plan severely restricted workers’ collective bargaining ability by limiting the scope of bargaining to wage issues and by banning negotiations on any matters that might interfere with the employer’s right to organize the firm. At

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<sup>29</sup> Alejandro Foxley, “The Neoconservative Economic Experiment in Chile,” in *Military Rule in Chile*, eds., J. Samuel Valenzuela and Arturo Valenzuela (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 32-33, 45. See also Pilar Vergara, “Changes in the Economic Functions of the Chilean State,” in *ibid.*, 85-116.

<sup>30</sup> Constable and Valenzuela, *A Nation of Enemies*, 191-192.

<sup>31</sup> Manuel Barrera and J. Samuel Valenzuela, “The Development of Labor Movement Opposition to the Military Regime,” in *Military Rule*, 236, 236n4.

<sup>32</sup> For the military regime’s labor policies in the 1970s, see Karen L. Remmer, “Political Demobilization in Chile, 1973-1978,” *Comparative Politics* 12(3) (1980): 275-301.

the same time, it allowed employers to modify contracts without consulting employees, to hire replacement workers during strike (which was limited to sixty days), and to dismiss workers without providing any justification.<sup>33</sup> It introduced, moreover, new bargaining entities inside firms designed to compete with, and ultimately weaken, unions.

The military regime ensured through constitutional reform that the social relations established under its rule were to be preserved. As I will discuss in the next section, the constitution of 1980, while embracing the transition to democracy in an attempt to legitimize and extend authoritarian rule, erected institutional barriers that would make changing the basic frame of society exceedingly difficult. The 1980 constitution, which was accepted by opposition leaders during the negotiation process and played a significant role in shaping the direction of democratization in Chile, was named the “Constitution of Liberty” in honor of Hayek’s 1960 book.<sup>34</sup>

Pinochet’s authoritarian redefinition of democracy finds a striking parallel in South Korea. In October 27, 1972, a year before the coup in Chile, Park Chung Hee, a former general who staged a successful coup in 1961 against the democratic and short-lived Chang Myon government (1960-61) and was elected President in 1964, declared the “*yushin*” (literally meaning “revitalizing reform”) regime.<sup>35</sup> The *yushin* constitution was purported to “consolidate democracy that suits our circumstances” in order “to eliminate at once all factions and political schemes undermining stability and to accelerate the reunification of Korea through the maximization of efficiency and

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<sup>33</sup> Posner, *State, Market, and Democracy in Chile*, 51.

<sup>34</sup> For Hayek’s argument for an upper legislative body insulated from political pressure as a “safeguard” for democracy, see his *Law, Legislation, and Liberty*, vol. 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), chap. 17.

<sup>35</sup> On the context in which the *yushin* regime was established, see Young-soon Kim, “Yushin cheje-ui soorip wonin-ae kwanhan yonku” [A Study of the Establishment of the Yushin Regime], in *Onul-ui Hankuk Jabonjuui-wa Kuk-ka* [Capitalism and the State in Contemporary Korea], ed. Sansa-yon (Seoul: Hangil-sa, 1988), 23-89.

national unity.”<sup>36</sup> The thematic resemblance of the yushin constitution and the Declaration is hard to miss. Both documents, articulating the essence of Pinochet’s and Park’s authoritarianism, categorically reject the expression and negotiation of different social voices—politics as such—for the sake of stability and efficiency. Even a brief look at major features of the yushin constitution clearly demonstrates this point. The National Assembly was deprived of its congressional oversight and its yearly session was limited to 150 days. One third of its members were to be chosen by the National Congress for Unification (NCU), which was under the direct influence of the president. Most blatantly, the constitution authorized the president to dissolve the National Assembly when he deems necessary. The judicial branch, too, came under the president’s power. The constitution also abolished review of legality for confinement and eliminated clauses on the nullity of confessions extracted by torture. Together, these measures freed Park from all formal and informal pressure. At the same time, the constitution stipulated that the president be elected indirectly by the NCU and eliminated a two-term limit, effectively guaranteeing Park’s permanent rule (in 1972, Park, the only candidate, was elected president with 99.99% of NCU votes).<sup>37</sup> As the public criticism of the yushin constitution grew, Park issued Emergency Degree no. 9 in May 13, 1975 and banned all oppositional activities, including the reporting of those activities.

The yushin constitution was but a consolidation of tendencies already present in Park’s nominally democratic rule (1963-1972), during which politics had been replaced by authoritarian decision-making and technocratic management. As in Pinochet’s case, Park’s authoritarianism was less a rejection than a redefinition of democratic politics. Park made this point clear as early as in 1962:

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<sup>36</sup> Donga Ilbo-sa [Donga Daily Co.], “Yushin Hunbup [The Yushin Constitution],” *Donga Yonkam* [Dong-a Yearbook] (1973), 574-575.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 527-532.

“Our attempt to import democracy over the past 17 years has failed because we have been trying to uncritically adopt a foreign ideal without a sufficient reflection on our nation’s history and culture ... We can import only a form of democracy, not its roots. We have come to realize, if belatedly, that our task is the “Koreanization” of democracy. Since democracy relies not on irresponsible freedom but on self-disciplining freedom, [Korean] democracy must include elements of leadership and guidance.”<sup>38</sup>

Park called his alternative vision of democracy “administrative democracy.”<sup>39</sup> Indeed, Park created a huge bureaucratic system and used it as a major venue for the making and execution of policies, bypassing democratic processes. Park gave great discretionary power to the state bureaucracy and, in order to ensure its effective function (and maintain his personal control over it), insulated major bureaucratic organizations such as the Economic Planning Board and the Ministry of Finance from political and social pressure.<sup>40</sup> Even before political activities were constitutionally banned under the yushin regime, the Korean Central Intelligence Agency freely suppressed dissidents, bending and ignoring law.

Although Park was deeply committed to nationalism and always emphasized national unity, his rule was predicated upon the political as well as economic exclusion. And as in Chile under Pinochet, the nature of this exclusion was deeply conditioned by the Cold War. Ever since its independence from Japanese colonial rule after World War II, the South Korean state has depended heavily on the United States that needed a bastion against the expansion of Communism in East Asia and, especially after the

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<sup>38</sup> Park Chung Hee, *Woori Minjok-ui Naakal Kil* [Our Nation’s Path] (1962), reproduced in *Hamyun Dwenda! Teolchyeo Irunaja* [We Can Do It! Let’s Rise Up] (Seoul: Dongseo Choolpan-sa, 2005), 102-103.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 178.

<sup>40</sup> See Byung-Kook Kim, “The Leviathan: Economic Bureaucracy under Park,” in *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea*, eds. Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 204-210.

Korean War, anti-communism became *raison d'être* for South Korean regimes. The military junta led by Park, too, declared immediately after the 1961 coup that it would “oppose communism as its primary objective.”<sup>41</sup> Although North Korea was undeniably a security threat, anti-communism was used far more broadly as a tool to delegitimize and suppress domestic opposition throughout Park’s eighteen-year rule. The National Security Law (NSL) and the Anticommunist Law (AL)—major legal mechanisms by which anti-communism was reinforced—subjected to severe penalty (including capital punishment) “any person” who “has organized an association or group for the purpose of ... disturbing the state or who prepared or conspired to do so” or who “has praised, encouraged, or sided with anti-state organizations or members thereof on foreign communist lines or benefited the same in any way through other means.”<sup>42</sup> With this vague definition, virtually anyone who challenged Park’s authoritarian rule could be, and was, criminalized. Between 1961 and 1980, a total of 6,135 individuals were arrested for the violation of the NSL and the AL alone.<sup>43</sup> In particular, the Park regime took particular care to depoliticize workers—a social group that was rapidly growing in size due to Korea’s swift industrialization.<sup>44</sup> The Park regime’s anti-labor policies, especially its ban on the political activities of organized labor, continued under the rule of Chun Doo Hwan, who filled a power vacuum created by Park’s assassination in 1979 through another coup, and even after the democratic transition.

While violently repressing the politicization of various social groups, Park created the capitalist class through his state-led economic development. Unlike in

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<sup>41</sup> “Text of Korean Rebels’ Communique,” *The New York Times*, May 17, 1961.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in William Shaw, *Human Rights in Korea: History and Policy Perspectives* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 184.

<sup>43</sup> The number of arrested individuals rises to 11,384 if we include the violation of other laws and decrees. Wonsoo Pak, *Kukka Poanpop yonku* [A Study of the National Security Law], vol. 2 (Seoul: Yuksa Pipyong-sa, 1992), 31.

<sup>44</sup> Hagen Koo, *Korean Workers: The Culture and Politics of Class Formation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), chap 2.

Chile and Latin America more generally, the bourgeoisie as a social class was almost non-existent in South Korea after its independence. After he came into power, Park personally chose a handful of businessmen who he believed were willing and able to execute his risky plan for export-driven industrialization, and rewarded their cooperation and loyalty with subsidized bank loans, state-guaranteed foreign loans, and favoritism in awarding licenses. Under the auspices of the state, these handpicked businessmen turned their companies into giant industrial conglomerates owned and managed by their family members (*chaebol*). In the 1970s, as Park switched the focus of the Korean economy from the light manufacturing to the heavy and chemical industry, the *chaebol* not only grew in size but also penetrated into every corner of the Korean economy.<sup>45</sup> In 1982 staggering 82.1 percent of the total manufacturing was noncompetitive, namely, owned by a few *chaebol* groups.<sup>46</sup> And the *chaebol*'s power expanded even more throughout the 1980s. Pressured by the United States and led by US trained Korean economists, the Chun Doo Hwan government "liberalized" the economy, namely, loosened the state's protection of and control over the financial market. Gaining control over its financial resources hitherto monopolized by the state, business stopped being subservient to the state and began to act as an autonomous and powerful political actor. The symbolic event that illustrates this shifting power relationship between the state and business occurred in 1985, when Chung Chu-young, the owner of Hyundai and Korea's most influential industrialist at the time, made a public plea for ending state interventionism, which would have been unimaginable under Park.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> For a detailed discussion of the development of the *chaebol* in the Park regime, see Eun Mee Kim and Gil-Sung Park, "The Chaebol," in *The Park Chung Hee Era*, 265-294.

<sup>46</sup> Cited in Jung-en Woo, *Race to the Swift: State and Finance in Korean Industrialization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 173.

<sup>47</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, 200.

Against this backdrop, we can now appreciate what was truly demanded in the democratization process in Chile and South Korea. In their long struggle for democratization, people aspired not simply to a set of institutions that would allow them to elect their leaders but to an alternative to the system of exclusion upon which authoritarian rule rested. Those who struggled for the end of authoritarianism surely varied in their aims and beliefs, but they were united in their opposition to the authoritarian regime's shallow vision of democracy that benefited a few and silenced the vast majority. And it was through that united opposition a broad sense of what counts as genuine democracy emerged. Beneath what is conveniently called "democratic transition" was a long and arduous process through which the excluded under authoritarianism were identified and articulated, however incompletely, as a political subject that ought to be at the center of genuine democracy.

As noted above, Pinochet violently suppressed and dissolved political parties and major social organizations such as labor unions. Facing extreme poverty, unemployment, economic insecurity and lacking the social safety net traditionally provided by political parties, Chileans in poor neighborhoods (*poblaciones*) were therefore forced to resort to small local organizations such as handicraft workshops, wholesale food-buying cooperatives, soup kitchens, savings groups, and health care groups. A conservative estimate indicates that at least 223,795 people (out of estimated 1,208,910 people living in Santiago's *poblaciones*) benefited directly from these organizations.<sup>48</sup> While these organizations focused primarily on meeting short-term economic needs, they also contributed to the formation of political consciousness and solidarity. For instance, soup kitchens (*ollas comunes*) were not charity organizations that provided food to the poor but cooperative groups in which women

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<sup>48</sup> Luis Razeto, "Popular Organizations and the Economy of Solidarity," in *Popular Culture in Chile: Resistance and Survival*, eds., Kenneth Aman and Cristián Parker, trans. Terry Cambias (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 83.



cooked together a single pot of food from what was contributed by each member or donated, and distributed it one ladle per family member (the term “*ollas communes*” literally means “common pots”).<sup>49</sup> Participating in such organizations not only made women realize that their difficulties were not an individual but social problem shared by others but also reminded them of the importance of acting collectively in addressing that problem.<sup>50</sup> Also, many women whose family members “disappeared” after the coup came together in workshops and made burlaps (*arpilleras*) from scraps of cloth. Under the sponsorship of the Catholic Church, the only organization relatively protected from the military’s brutal repression, the *arpilleristas* voiced a critique of the authoritarian regime in a time when there was practically no room for political dissidence.<sup>51</sup> Joined by youth groups, “interest groups” (short-term groups whereby people demanded housing or sought to alleviate their debt), and human rights organizations, these popular organizations served as a training ground for solidarity, participation, and cooperation, maintaining political space and nurturing new political actors. As Kenneth Roberts has noted, these organizations “provided space for the resumption of grass-roots political participation” and “became primary building blocks of popular resistance to the dictatorship.”<sup>52</sup>

It is debatable how much internal coherence and political autonomy these popular organizations actually possessed. Philip Oxhorn argues that these popular organizations developed their own collective identity and competed with political parties for constituencies in poblaciones,<sup>53</sup> while Cathy Schneider asserts that it was

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<sup>49</sup> Julia Paley, *Marketing Democracy: Power and Social Movements in Post-Dictatorship Chile* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 67.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Marjorie Agosin, *Tapestries of Hope, Threads of Love: The Arpillera Movement in Chile, 1974-1994* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996).

<sup>52</sup> Kenneth Roberts, *Deepening Democracy? The Modern Left and Social Movements in Chile and Peru* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 123.

<sup>53</sup> Philip Oxhorn, *Organizing Civil Society: The Popular Sectors and the Struggle for Democracy in Chile* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994). See also Razeto, “Popular Organizations and the Economy of Solidarity,” 90-91.

Communist party activists that politicized and mobilized the otherwise passive popular sector.<sup>54</sup> Resolving this empirical question is not essential to our discussion; it suffices to recognize that, when no other political and social groups were able, these popular organizations represented *lo popular* or *el pueblo*—meaning the “(marginalized) people”—as an *aspirational category* that provided a unifying symbol of the opposition to authoritarianism. As Kenneth Aman observes, “middle class intellectuals, artists, activists in the church, and other opponents of the military regime and even of its more moderate Christian-Democratic successor have increasingly discovered in popular culture a certain inspiration, so much so that some have warned of a kind of romanticism that imputes to *el pueblo* (the people) more coherence than it possesses or can sustain.”<sup>55</sup>

When a major economic crisis hit the country in the early 1980s and a series of anti-Pinochet protests finally erupted in 1983 after a long period of terror and silence, the popular sector emerged as a major driving force of the anti-authoritarian struggle. In the early stages of the anti-authoritarian struggle, most opposition leaders considered popular mobilization a legitimate and viable way to overthrow the dictatorship (for different reasons, as will be discussed in the next section). They were strongly opposed to accepting the controlled procedures for democratic transition set out in the 1980 constitution and believed they should (and would be able to) press the Pinochet regime to immediately turn over power through popular protests. When Patricio Aylwin, future president of post-transition Chile, suggested in a 1984 seminar that the opposition explore ways to work within the constitution of 1980, one participant recalled, it was “enormously criticized within the [moderate-centrist]

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<sup>54</sup> Cathy Lisa Schneider, *Shantytown Protest in Pinochet's Chile* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995).

<sup>55</sup> Kenneth Aman, “Introduction: Placing Chile's Popular Culture in Context,” in *Popular Culture in Chile*, 2.

Christian Democratic Party and, obviously, by the rest of the opposition.”<sup>56</sup> Indeed, up until the mid-1980s, most political party leaders across the ideological spectrum were supportive of autonomous popular organizations as a crucial element of a more participatory, stable, and robust democracy. Leaders of the Socialist Party (both its more radical and moderate branches) argued, in stark contrast to their diagnosis just a few years later, that “democratizing society ... make[s] it more difficult for the dictator to succeed” and that “if there had been real participation by the people, there would have been no military coup.”<sup>57</sup>

However, the vision of democracy that incorporates el pueblo as its integral part would prove to be short-lived. As a sense of exhaustion set in after three years of intense protests and the Pinochet regime still seemed unshaken in its ability to survive and repress, major political parties would undergo a significant change in their strategy as well as ideology and, in so doing, grow increasingly distanced from the popular sector (this point will also be discussed in the next section).

In South Korea, what served as a unifying symbol of the anti-authoritarian struggle was the concept of “*minjung*,” also meaning ordinary and oppressed people. Like el pueblo, *minjung* emerged from the experience of exclusion under authoritarianism and assumed a central place in the counter-discourse to the authoritarian regime’s instrumental vision of democracy. Like el pueblo, *minjung*, too, not only existed as an empirical segment of the population but was aspired as an ideal to be realized. As prominent Korean political scientist Jang Jip Choi states, “while the *minjung* exists objectively ... [it] is not a fixed or limited sociopolitical entity, but

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<sup>56</sup> Cited in Jeffrey M. Puryear, *Thinking Politics: Intellectuals and Democracy in Chile, 1973-1988* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 79-80. See also Genaro Arriagada Herrera, *Pinochet: The Politics of Power* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), 70-74.

<sup>57</sup> Interviews cited in Oxborn, *Organizing Civil Society*, 190.

embodies a dynamic, liberating subjectivity that arises from a history of oppression.”<sup>58</sup>

The term minjung was used as early as the 1920s during the struggle against Japanese colonialism, but it was in reaction to the yushin regime that it arose as a guiding concept of the democratic opposition. Grounded in the fact of political oppression and economic exploitation, the concept minjung was articulated by students and intellectuals as both a critique of and an alternative to the yushin regime. This duality of minjung is captured, for instance, in the account of Han Wansang, one of the most influential theorists of the minjung discourse. Applying the Marxian distinction between a class in itself and a class for itself, Han distinguished “the dormant minjung” and “the conscious minjung” and argued that the conscious minjung (e.g., students and intellectuals) had the social and moral responsibility to help the dormant minjung (e.g., workers and peasants) recognize their status as minjung and, as its flip side, the injustice of the yushin regime. When the duality of minjung is thus unified, minjung could “transform themselves from the object of history to the subject of history” that “determines [the course of] history and the structure [of society].”<sup>59</sup>

Importantly, from the standpoint of minjung the yushin regime was perceived as an inseparably interrelated set of problems encompassing political dictatorship, economic injustice, and moral corruption. If the minjung movement demanded democracy as an alternative to authoritarianism, it did so in an attempt to overcome *all* those problems. This broad, minjung vision of democracy was clearly expressed in a declaration issued in 1979 by such opposition leaders as Yoon Bo-sun, Ham Seok-hun, and Kim Dae Jung. Characterizing the ruling elite as an “anti-minjung group” that “abolished the freedom and rights of minjung and refused to adopt democratic institutions by exploiting the Cold War logic,” they stated thus: “we object to the

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<sup>58</sup> Jang Jip Choi, “Political Cleavages in South Korea,” in *State and Society in Contemporary Korea*, ed. Hagen Koo (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 17n6.

<sup>59</sup> Han Wansang, *Minjung Saheohak* [Minjung Sociology] (Seoul: Chongno Seojeok, 1981), 34.

annihilation of democracy under the pretense of anti-communism and national security. We reject the economic system that allows all the privileges to be monopolized by comprador capitalists under the name of economic development. We denounce the moral depravity and unfettered materialism of the privileged class thriving on the misery of the majority.” It was in order to redress these problems that they called for a “restoration of democracy” that would promote the “creativity and participation of minjung.”<sup>60</sup>

From its inception, the minjung movement was closely intertwined with the formation of the Korean working-class.<sup>61</sup> The defining event for the alliance between intellectuals (especially university students) and workers occurred in November 13, 1970. Chun Tae-il, a young garment cutter in a textile factory, committed self-immolation after his numerous attempts to petition to the Ministry of Labor about horrendous working conditions to which his fellow workers—mostly young girls (between the ages of fourteen and twenty) who had migrated from rural areas—were subject ended in vain. Chun’s death put the entire Korean society into a state of shock, dramatically and tragically revealing the dark side of industrialization. In particular, Chun’s wish, expressed in his diary, to have college friends who could teach him how to read Chinese characters so that he would be able to understand the labor laws left university students with an immense sense of shame and guilt. Following Chun’s death, many university students came to be involved in the labor movement by teaching at the night schools (*yahak*) that provided workers with the basic education or, sometimes, by becoming workers themselves—the trend which would accelerate in the 1980s. As in Chile, Christian organizations functioned as a protective umbrella for

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<sup>60</sup> Cited in Kim Samwoong ed., *Minjok, Minju, Minjung Seonun* [The Minjok, Minju, Minjung Declaration] (Seoul: Irwol Seokak, 1984). 309-310.

<sup>61</sup> For the intellectual-worker alliance in South Korea, see Namhee Lee, *The Making of Minjung: Democracy and the Politics of Representation in South Korea* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), 214-239.

intellectuals and labor activists and, in the prominent case of the Urban Industrial Mission, actively helped workers organize independent unions in opposition to the existing state- or company-controlled unions. While the labor movement in the 1970s remained, overall, scattered and unorganized, these efforts did materialize in a few momentous labor conflicts, including ones in Dong-il Textile in 1978 and YH Trading in 1979, the latter of which served as a catalyst for huge protests in Pusan and Masan (two major industrial cities in the southeastern region of South Korea) that eventually led to the demise of the yushin regime.

The minjung movement took a decisively radical turn in 1980 when a brief political opening followed by the assassination of Park Chung Hee—the so-called “Seoul Spring”—was quickly and brutally closed in May 1980. Chun Doo Hwan, unwilling to give up the power he had acquired through a coup, ruthlessly trampled on the popular protest that broke out in the city of Kwangju (a city in the southwestern region of South Korea that had been marginalized throughout Park’s rule) demanding an end to the military dictatorship. Chun sent in paratroopers and had the army fire on civilians, killing hundreds. The Kwangju massacre set the tone of the Chun regime’s authoritarianism and, at the same time, pushed the minjung movement in a more radical direction. Through a long reflection on the “defeat” in the spring of 1980, many leaders of the minjung movement came to conclude that a moral critique of the government or a humanistic attempt to improve the conditions of individual workers was too meek and unsystematic to be a solution to the grave and complex problem plaguing South Korea; what was needed, they now believed, was a revolutionary movement that would allow minjung to seize power and radically transform the entire social system.<sup>62</sup> Under the growing influence of Marxism-Leninism, many students

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<sup>62</sup> Park Hyun-chae and Cho Hee-yeon, eds., *Hankook Sahoe Guseongchae Nonjaeng* [The Korean Social Formation Debate], vol. 1 (Seoul: Jooksan, 1989), 14-15.

believed that the working class would be the principal agent of this radical transformation and entered the factory as a “disguised worker” (*wijang chuiop-ja*) in order to help raise workers’ consciousness, organize democratic unions, and make linkages to a broader political struggle against authoritarianism.<sup>63</sup>

Based on the achievements of the minjung movement throughout the 1970s and the early 1980s, the democratization movement finally and triumphantly arose to the surface in the mid-1980s. It culminated in the “June 29 Declaration,” issued in 1987 by Chun’s Democratic Justice Party, which announced the renewal of direct presidential election, thereby marking the symbolic end of authoritarian rule. As in Chile, however, in the actual process of democratization the vision of minjung democracy would be alienated and displaced rather than accommodated.

### **The Specter of Instrumental Democracy: Post-Transition Politics in Chile and South Korea**

In the previous section, I tried to demonstrate that the democratization movement in Chile and South Korea developed its own vision of democracy in opposition to the circumscribed and instrumental democracy promoted by authoritarianism. That alternative vision of democracy, I argued, was based on the (incomplete and tension-filled) articulation of the excluded as a new democratic subject—*el pueblo* and *minjung*. The point here is not to romanticize *el pueblo* and *minjung*. The concepts *el pueblo* and *minjung* are important not only because they represent the victims of authoritarianism but because they enable us to recognize that, in the contexts of Chile and South Korea, democratization did not simply mean the adoption of electoral institutions but a rejection of authoritarianism’s *system of*

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<sup>63</sup> The number of college students who became factory workers was estimated to be three thousand or more in the mid-1980s. George E. Ogle, *South Korea: Dissent within the Economic Miracle* (London: Zed Books, 1990), 99.

*exclusion* that instrumentalizes and hollows out democracy. Thus understood, *el pueblo* and *minjung* provide a useful lens through which to evaluate the direction of democratic development in post-transition Chile and South Korea.

As noted at the outset, there is no denying that there are important qualitative differences between authoritarianism and electoral democracy. Nonetheless, there are signs that democratic politics in post-transition Chile and South Korea is overshadowed by the political structure as well as the social relations inherited from their authoritarian past. This, of course, is not to suggest that deeply entrenched social structures can change overnight (though it should also be noted that more than twenty years have passed since Chile and South Korea made a transition to electoral democracy). Rather, my concern is that the nature and the working of democracy in Chile and South Korea tend to reinforce, rather than challenge, instrumental democracy. This troubling development is due, in part, to the fact that the democratization process in Chile and South Korea was severed from the majority of the population and dominated by a small group of political elites. The result is a political system that manipulates and restructures people's interest and dispositions rather than solicits and responds to popular demands. Combined with the elitist nature of democracy, structural changes dictated by neoliberalism contributed further to the instrumentalization of democracy. In the post-transition period, both Chile and South Korea accepted neoliberalism not simply as an economic model but as a regulative principle of society under the banners of "modernization" or "globalization." The social structure produced by neoliberalism undermines the prospect of realizing *el pueblo* or *minjung* democracy envisioned and aspired during the struggle for democracy, as it redefines social problems as private matters and dissolves collective subjectivities into fiercely competing and yet politically deprived individuals.



In Chile, while most opposition leaders cohered in their rejection of the 1980 constitution, they welcomed popular protests that began to erupt in 1983 for different reasons. On the one hand, the Democratic Popular Movement (*Movimiento Democrático Popular*, MDP)—a coalition of the Communist Party, the more radical Almeyda branch of the Socialist Party, and the Christian Left—sought to topple the Pinochet regime by relying directly on mass mobilization. On the other hand, the Democratic Alliance (*Alianza Democrática*, AD)—a coalition of the centrist Christian Democrat Party and the more moderate Núñez branch of the Socialist Party—viewed the protests as a tactical step that would bring the military regime to the negotiation table. The trouble was that, even by 1986, both strategies were not working. The Pinochet regime made a mockery of various requests to renegotiate the 1980 constitution by pretending to consider them only until it passed its most vulnerable phase and rebuffing them as soon as it regained strength. The popular insurrection strategy, too, lost much of its momentum, as participation dwindled in the face of the Pinochet regime's ruthless repression and the middle class, alarmed by violent protests led by increasingly smaller and more militant groups, withdrew its support.

Hence starting in 1986, the opposition's commitment to popular mobilization began to disintegrate. The tension within the democratic opposition between the rising level of violence and the growing concern with it had reached a breaking point on September 26, 1986, when the Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front, an armed revolutionary force closely associated with the Communist Party, made a failed assassination attempt on Pinochet, inciting a new wave of repression from the regime. Immediately following the event, José Joaquín Brunner, one of the most influential sociologists then working with the opposition, leaked to a leading pro-government newspaper, *La Segunda*, a memorandum written for internal party discussion in which he criticized the opposition's social mobilization strategy, proposed cutting ties with

the hard-left MDP, and called for a negotiation within the framework of the 1980 constitution. While, at first, Brunner was roundly and vehemently criticized, major figures of the opposition moved to accept Brunner's position in the ensuing debate.<sup>64</sup> This was a rather swift change of position.<sup>65</sup> In May 1986, Ricardo Lagos, leader of the Socialist Party and future president, remarked that "there is no incompatibility between a political solution [negotiation with the military] and social mobilization." Only about six months later, however, Ricardo Núñez of the same party made a sharp distinction between "political solutions" and "all forms of struggle [insurrectionary strategies espoused by the Communist Party]," arguing in favor of the former.<sup>66</sup> Even the Almeyda Socialists within the MDP soon followed suit by distancing themselves from the popular insurrection strategy. By 1987 electoral participation in a plebiscite designed by the 1980 constitution became the predominant strategy of the democratic opposition.

The constitution of 1980 stipulated that the transition to civilian rule take place through a two-step process. First, a plebiscite would be held in 1988 to decide people's preference for a single candidate from the military (which everyone presumed, correctly, to be Pinochet). If Pinochet won, he would stay in power as the president for another eight years. Only if he lost, the transition process would proceed to the second phase and a presidential election would be held the next year. So once the opposition accepted this process, its only chance lay in securing as many votes as possible in the plebiscite and the subsequent presidential election. This meant that popular mobilization, which was becoming more violent and thus increasingly alienating the middle class, should be tamed and brought down to a less threatening

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<sup>64</sup> Puryear, *Thinking Politics*, 107-108.

<sup>65</sup> It is to be noted, however, that this seemingly rapid turn of events was not simply the outcome of strategic considerations but a reflection of the debate on the causes of the breakdown of the Allende regime. This point will be discussed in more detail shortly.

<sup>66</sup> Cited in Puryear, *Thinking Politics*, 106, 108.

level. The need to manage the popular sector was only reinforced by the coalitional nature of the opposition. In order to show that it was a viable alternative to the military regime, some seventeen parties united into a coalition named the “Command for the No (*Concertación por el No*)”—which would later develop into the Command of the Parties for Democracy (*Concertación de los Partidos por la Democracia*, Concertación). While the Concertación was dominated by the Christian Democrats and the Núñez Socialists, it could not afford to ignore smaller parties given the overall weakness of the opposition as compared to the military regime. Maintaining unity among these various parties was crucial and daunting, and the demands of the popular sector, which were often more radical than what was and could be agreed on within the Concertación, were considered to jeopardize that unity. Thus, throughout the transition process, the opposition dismantled the autonomy of the popular sector and subordinated it to the needs of political elites. In a revealing case, when the Unitary Command of the Pobladores (*Comando Unitario de Pobladores*, CUT)—an autonomous organization created in 1986 to represent the popular sector—organized a March Against Hunger in 1988 against the will of the Concertación, the Concertación replaced the leaders of the CUT with party loyalists.<sup>67</sup>

The emphasis on unity is understandable within the strategic context of the late 1980s. But “democracy by agreements (*democracia de los acuerdos*)” became the dominant discourse even after the transition, silencing various demands under the name of consensus that “only existed in order to end the dictatorship.”<sup>68</sup> In part, this illusory consensus is maintained by the legacies of the Pinochet regime. The political presence of the military (with Pinochet as commander in chief) remained very strong

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<sup>67</sup> Philip Oxhorn, “Where Did All the Protesters Go? Popular Mobilization and the Transition to Democracy in Chile,” *Latin American Perspectives* 21(3) (1994), 59-60.

<sup>68</sup> Manuel Antonio Garretón, *Incomplete Democracy: Political Democratization in Chile and Latin America*, trans. by R. Kelly Washbourne with Gregory Horvath (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 152.

in post-transition Chile.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, the constitution of 1980 that the Concertación accepted contained built-in institutional mechanisms that served to thwart attempts to modify the institutional framework or seek justice for the crimes perpetrated by the military—attempts that would presumably disrupt “the consensus.” One such mechanism was the appointment of nine “designated senators” in addition to thirty-eight elected senators. The designated senators repeatedly transformed the Concertación’s majority in the Senate into a majority for the right, frustrating attempts to amend the constitution or to undertake fundamental reforms (this constitutional provision was abolished in 2006). Similarly, the 1980 constitution established a unique binomial electoral system that works to the advantage of the right. Under this system, each electoral district has two Chamber seats. Each party or coalition can run two candidates, but in order to win both seats, a party or coalition must win more than two thirds of the district vote. In other words, a second-place party (typically the right wing party *Unión Democrática Independiente*) can be guaranteed a seat with 33.4 percent of the vote, no matter how far it trails behind the Concertación (this system persists until today).<sup>70</sup> These institutional devices give disproportionate power to the minority, thereby allowing them to preserve the authoritarian past as part of the consensus in post-transition Chile.

But perhaps more important, the ideology of consensus is reinforced by the Concertación itself. The ideal of “democracy by agreements” arose within the democratic opposition through a long and painful reflection on the collapse of the “Chilean road to Socialism.” Many opposition leaders (including those of the Left)

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<sup>69</sup> In a particularly revealing case, Pinochet deployed on May 28, 1993 heavily armed troops and tanks near the presidential palace, La Moneda, in protest of imminent legal proceedings against military officers accused of human rights violation. Alarmed by this obvious threat, Patricio Aylwin, then president, immediately applied Pinochet’s 1978 amnesty law that pardons political crimes committed between 1973 and 1978. James Petras and Fernando I. Leiva, *Democracy and Poverty in Chile: The Limits to Electoral Politics* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 194-195.

<sup>70</sup> Posner, *State, Market, and Democracy in Chile*, 78-83.

became very wary of polarizing tendencies to set one segment of the population (e.g., the working class) against the other (e.g., the bourgeoisie), which was increasingly perceived to be responsible for the tragic demise of the Allende regime.<sup>71</sup> Edgardo Boeninger, Aylwin's Chief of Staff, summarized this mentality well in the following remark: "Should a government attempt to make drastic changes in the socioeconomic system—as was the case of Chile under Allende—the threatened sectors will decide that democracy is no longer able to protect their basic values and interests. A "coup mentality" is the likely result."<sup>72</sup> Alejandro Foxley, finance minister in the Aylwin government, went so far as to speak of advantages of the 1980 constitution. Institutional mechanisms such as designated senators and a binomial electoral system, Foxley argued, "forced us to reach broad agreements across the political spectrum instead of taking the narrow view of the parties in power ... When you are forced by the rules of the game to play moderate politics, the process itself transforms people

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<sup>71</sup> This recognition occasioned the so-called "ideological renovation" of the Chilean Left. As the analytical focus gradually shifted from "defeat" (which places the responsibilities squarely on the military) to the "failure" of the Left (which reconsiders the doctrinal application of Marxism-Leninism), the Chilean Left came to conclude that the pursuit of a predetermined "model" of socialism through direct mass mobilization *at the expense of* democratic principles was responsible for the failure to construct a robust majority behind the Allende government and for extreme social polarization. Moreover, the atrocious violence that the Left had disproportionately suffered under Pinochet made them appreciate the significance of human rights, pluralism, and the rule of law they used to dismiss as "bourgeois" or "liberal." Thus emerged a democratic socialism that rejects a revolutionary movement aiming exclusively to overthrow capitalism through an alliance of a vanguard party and the working class and, instead, embraces democratic contestation as a legitimate way to pursue socialist issues (thereby contingencies involved in the democratic process, including the reversibility of the socialist agenda). As Manuel Antonio Garretón, prominent Chilean political scientist and a major theoretician of socialist renovation, put it, "given that there is a permanent struggle within the democratic system ... socialism cannot be defined as a model for society which is established once and for all ... [Rather] socialism is a principle of social transformation, of the elimination of various kinds of alienation, oppression, and exploitation." From this point of view, the concept of the "transition to socialism" loses "all its meaning," Garretón maintains. "There is no transition from one society to another, but rather a permanent transformation. There is no socialist model, only a socialist process." Manuel Antonio Garretón, "The Ideas of Socialist Renovation in Chile," *Rethinking Marxism* 2 (Summer 1989): 8-39, quote at 26.

<sup>72</sup> Edgardo Boeninger, "Lessons from the Past, Hopes for the Future," *Journal of Democracy* 1(2) (1990), 13.

into moderate politicians.”<sup>73</sup> Referring to this powerful ideological convergence around the imperative for consensus, influential Chilean sociologist Tomás Moulian declared that “the consensus is the founding act of contemporary Chile.” According to Moulian, however, the consensus does not express wise moderation but constitutes the democratic opposition’s admission of “fault” on their part and of “the irrationality and utopianism” of popular aspirations in the period prior to the military coup—a gesture that effectively recognizes the existence of “basic rational nuclei (*núcleos racionales básicos*)” in the socioeconomic system established under Pinochet.<sup>74</sup> In consequence, Moulian laments, in contemporary Chile “politics no longer exists as a struggle between true alternatives, as historicity (*historicidad*), but exists merely as a history (*historia*) of small variations, adjustments, changes in aspects of society that do not compromise the global dynamics [of capitalism].”<sup>75</sup>

Indeed, the Concertación, which ruled Chile in four consecutive governments after the transition until 2010, continued to prioritize the preservation of consensus over the deepening of democracy. Instead of promoting popular participation that was abolished by the Pinochet regime and, after its brief resurgence, suspended during the transition process, the Concertación governments operated in a highly technocratic fashion, echoing, disturbingly, the Pinochet era.<sup>76</sup> The way in which participation is marginalized is visible, for instance, in the case of Community Economic Social Councils (*Consejos Económico-Social Communal*, CESCO). While created in 1992 to promote participation at the local level, the CESCO was strictly advisory in its nature

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<sup>73</sup> Cited in Jeanne Kinney Giraldo, “Development and Democracy in Chile: Finance Minister Alejandro Foxley and the Concertación Projects for the 1990s,” in *Technopols: Freeing Politics and Markets in Latin America in the 1990s*, ed. Jorge I. Domínguez (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 267.

<sup>74</sup> Moulian, *Chile actual*, 37-38.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>76</sup> For a detailed discussion of technocratic tendencies of the Concertación governments, see Patricio Silva, *In the Name of Reason: Technocrats and Politics in Chile* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), chap. 6.

and given no power to make any binding decisions or even hold the mayor accountable. Given that all people could do was to express their opinion on predetermined projects which the mayor could then choose to listen or ignore, it is not surprising that the CESCO was marked by extremely low membership and participation.<sup>77</sup> But perhaps the Concertación might not have even considered the hollow nature of the CESCO as the marginalization of participation, because it conformed to *its* definition of participation. The Concertación's unique view of participation was expressed in the first public assembly (*cabildo communal*) in 1991 through which the Concertación reached out to the popular sector for the first time since the transition. One member of the local health group requested that the municipal government make greater effort to clean the garbage dumps in the población to prevent the spread of cholera. In response, Hernán Rojo of the Concertación argued that garbage disposal is not the responsibility of the government, complaining that "[w]hat is lacking here is knowledge of how to operate in democracy." In democracy, Rojo asserted, "[e]veryone should participate. When it comes to garbage, and pavement, you are the ones who are going to propose the solutions and establish the projects. It is the very *poblador* organizations that execute them."<sup>78</sup> This encounter is suggestive because, as Julia Paley observes, it clearly shows how the Concertación understood popular organizations as "extensions of government services."<sup>79</sup> While, taken at face value, Rojo's definition of democracy seems benign ("you are going to propose the solutions and establish the projects"), the real meaning became clear when he disapproved any attempt by the pobladores to make demands on the government, asserting that they are the root cause of the problem. "Why should we clean up the

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<sup>77</sup> Posner, *State, Market, and Democracy in Chile*, 108-120.

<sup>78</sup> My discussion of this event relies on Paley's detailed account. Paley, *Marketing Democracy*, 165-173, quote at 166-167.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

fields, when it is the people of this población that dump garbage in them? The minute that field is cleared, you will just fill it with garbage again.”<sup>80</sup> From this point of view, the pobladores were a problem to be solved, so they can “participate” in supporting and implementing programs designed by the government as patients of some sort but not in setting the goals, initiating programs, and evaluating consequences as citizens.

While the Socialist governments of Ricardo Lagos (2000-2006) and Michelle Bachelet (2006-2010) did recognize the instrumental nature of participation, and the resulting gap between political parties and their social base, as a serious problem and tried to address it through major initiatives, their efforts barely went beyond an acknowledgement of the problem. As Philip Oxhorn observes, “the actual policies that have been implemented [by the Lagos and Bachelet governments] to increase participation have been minimal and largely limited to helping to employ policies decided by the political elite.”<sup>81</sup>

The problem, however, might not just be a matter of failed or ineffective policies, insofar as the basis of participatory democracy is eroded more fundamentally by the neoliberal socioeconomic system that remains unchallenged in post-transition Chile. To be sure, the Concertación led steady economic growth and increased social spending, significantly reducing poverty. But it did little to transform the *structure* of the socioeconomic system, including the relationship between business and labor and between the state and society in general. The perpetuation of the neoliberal system can be explained, in part, by the factors discussed above—the military’s strong political presence and institutional mechanisms that practically give the right veto power. Also, the Concertación had been careful not to dismantle neoliberalism in fear of losing the

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>81</sup> Philip Oxhorn, *Sustaining Civil Society: Economic Change, Democracy, and the Social Construction of Citizenship in Latin America* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), 123-124.



trust of powerful business sectors that were committed more to the economic model (which business tended to equate with the military regime) than to democracy.<sup>82</sup> But as in the case of their acceptance of circumscribed and instrumental democracy, the Concertación itself came to approve neoliberalism as a viable development strategy and a regulative principle of society. Throughout the 1970s and the early 1980s, most opposition leaders were ardently critical of neoliberalism, highlighting both its ineffectiveness as an economic model and its negative social impact including economic instability and inequality. However, as the economy experienced solid growth after the 1982-1983 financial crisis and the opposition moved from a confrontational to a compromising stance, major figures of the opposition came to accept neoliberalism as the unavoidable, if not the only, path toward “modernization” they must tread. In this view, the Pinochet regime is given credit for initiating the modernization process, though not without regrettable social cost, and becomes legitimate part of democratic Chile. Eugenio Tironi, Socialist and minister of information in the Aylwin government, made this view vividly clear in the following remark: “Under Pinochet, especially after 1983-1985 crisis, Chile experienced a modernizing thrust of a very different nature than those unfolding before 1973—one that corresponds closely to modernization tendencies at the international level, including reduction of the state’s role; efforts to induce flexibility, specialization, and internationalization of productive structures; abandonment of the goal of full employment; privatization of public enterprises and services; multiplication of atypical employment and reduction of the mass of waged workers; public assistance of a minimalist and discretionary character (in opposition to the universalism of the

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<sup>82</sup> For the Concertación’s efforts to establish and maintain a close policy network with the business sector, see Eduardo Silva, “From Dictatorship to Democracy: The Business-State Nexus in Chile’s Economic Transformation, 1975-1994,” *Comparative Politics* 28(3) (1996), esp. 311-314; see also idem., *The State and Capital in Chile: Business Elites, Technocrats, and Market Economics* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996).

welfare state); and liberalization and new flexibility for labor markets. This has been the purpose of the Pinochet revolution in Chile ... [T]his has also been the purpose of modernizing processes in all of the contemporary world, whether countries are developed or underdeveloped, capitalist or socialist.”<sup>83</sup>

The social structure dictated by neoliberalism undermines prospects of a more inclusive and participatory democracy by effectively prohibiting the disadvantaged from cohering into collective actors so as to make effective political claims. Organized labor, for instance, remains fragmented and vulnerable in post-transition Chile. This weakness is reinforced, in part, by legal and institutional mechanisms inherited from the military regime, which epitomized in Pinochet’s 1979 Labor Plan. While the Concertación initially promised “profound” changes to the Labor Plan, the Aylwin government quickly withdrew its commitment when it came into office, saying that labor policy should be decided by the autonomous negotiation of business and labor with minimal intervention by the state. But the negotiation quickly ended in deadlock, as business refused to give up their advantages afforded by the Labor Plan while labor, decimated over the course of Pinochet’s sixteen-year rule, lacked power to pressure business to compromise. In the end, the Aylwin government had to negotiate separately with business and labor and passed only very modest reforms, most of which were more than offset by loopholes and deleterious aspects of the Labor Plan that remained unchanged.<sup>84</sup> In a typical case, the new labor law required employers to provide cause for dismissal, raised the fine for unjust dismissal, and allowed workers to return to their jobs after the strike even if they were replaced during strikes—

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<sup>83</sup> Petras and Leiva, *Democracy and Poverty in Chile*. 50-64, quote at 63.

<sup>84</sup> Based on numerous interviews, Patrick Barret reported that the majority of the business leadership was very pleased with the outcome. “Indeed,” Barret said, “in private many candidly acknowledged that no real changes had been made in the labour code and that the flexibility of the labour market had not been reduced.” Patrick S. Barret, “Labour Policy, Labour-Business Relations and the Transition to Democracy in Chile,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 33 (2001), 587-588.

changes seemingly in the direction of more equal labor-business relations. But all these small changes were made practically ineffective because the definition of just cause for dismissal was so broad and vague “as to be virtually empty.”<sup>85</sup> The modest reforms in the new labor law were undermined further by the remaining clauses of the Labor Plan, such as the restriction on permissible issues of bargaining, which, as we have seen above, prohibited workers from negotiating on matters that “may restrict or limit the employer’s exclusive right to organize, lead and administer the firm.”<sup>86</sup>

The repeated failure of labor reform is symptomatic of (and reinforces) damaging effects of the neoliberal economic system on organized labor. Under the influence of neoliberalism that promotes the flexibility of the labor market as one of its central tenets, the growth of the Chilean economy was accompanied by the expansion of the informal sector (from about 20 percent of the workforce in 1993 to more than 30 percent in 2006),<sup>87</sup> where the absence of legal protection, low wages, and employment instability fragmented the workforce and created an acute sense of economic insecurity among individual workers, undercutting solidarity necessary for collective organization and action. This trend was not limited to the informal sector but pervaded Chilean society in general. Nearly one-third of the workforce was employed without a contract, and even a contract was not of much help in terms of employment stability as it rarely lasted more than a year. Under these conditions, it is not surprising that the rate of unionization remained essentially unchanged at 11.6 percent from 1980 to 2004,

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<sup>85</sup> The clause on firing states that “an employer can terminate a contract of work using as a cause the necessities of the firm, establishment or service; such as those deriving from rationalization, modernization, falls in productivity, changes in market conditions or in the economy, which make it necessary to dismiss one or more workers.” Louise Haagh, “The Emperor’s New Clothes: Labor Reform and Social Democratization in Chile,” *Studies in Comparative International Development* 37(1) (2002), 100.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 101. The reform of the Labor Plan made little progress in the subsequent governments of Eduardo Frei and Ricardo Lagos. See Volker Frank, “The Elusive Goal in Democratic Chile: Reforming the Pinochet Labor Legislation,” *Latin American Politics and Society* 44(1) (2002): 35-68.

<sup>87</sup> Figures cited in Roberts, *Deepening Democracy*, 154 and Oxhorn, *Sustaining Civil Society*, 111, respectively.

even after a modest surge in the early stages of transition (peaking at 15.1 percent in 1991)—a far cry from 33.7 percent in 1973. In the same period, however, the size of unions dramatically shrunk (from 84 members per union in 1980 to 38 members in 2004, as compared to 140 members in 1973), indicating growing fragmentation of the workforce.<sup>88</sup> The social consequences of neoliberalism, in short, systematically eroded the structural basis of organized labor, hindering it from emerging as a collective, and thus politically viable, actor.

The depoliticizing effects of neoliberalism are witnessed in broader state-society relations as well. As discussed in the previous section, beginning in the late-1970s the Pinochet regime extended neoliberalism into various sectors of society including social security, health, and education. The privatization of social welfare, which remains intact under the Concertación governments, proves to be damaging to democratic politics in various ways, as the exemplary case of the social security system clearly shows.<sup>89</sup> Chile had a public social security system in which workers, their employers, and the state contributed to the public funds to be administered by the state. In 1981, the military regime replaced this system with a new one in which profit-making entities known as the Administrators of Pension Funds (AFPs) managed the funds based exclusively on workers' individual contributions. As noted above, the privatization of the social security system was a boon to business, especially to a small number of economic groups (the three largest AFPs covering 78 percent of all participants were owned by economic conglomerates). In 1985, the AFPs had accumulated funds totaling 9.73 percent of Chile's GDP and by 2000 the figure has

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<sup>88</sup> Figures cited in Posner, *State, Market, and Democracy in Chile*, 44.

<sup>89</sup> My discussion of the Chilean social security system relies on the following works: Pilar Vergara, "In Pursuit of 'Growth with Equity': The Limits of Chile's Free Market Social Reforms," *NACLA: Report on the Americas* 29(6) (1996): 37-42; Silvia Borzutzky, *Vital Connections: Politics, Social Security, and Inequality in Chile* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002); Carmelo Mesa-Lago, "Myth and Reality of Pension Reform: The Latin American Evidence," *World Development* 30(8) (2002): 1309-1321.

risen to 52 percent. In contrast, privatization severely weakened the state that had to transfer massive amounts of resources to the private sector. This transfer alone accounted for a quarter of the state's annual social budget and, as a result, the public social security system rapidly deteriorated, suffering from a staggering deficit (nearly 5 percent of GDP) and the lack of resources. Privatization, in effect, creates a bifurcated welfare regime in which wealthier individuals increasingly switch to the private system, leaving those who cannot afford private services with the underfinanced state system. Having no stake in state services, high-income individuals are conditioned to care more about their own standing in the market than the politics of social rights and to be detached from the less privileged—which constitutes an increasingly large part of the population due to the rise of the informal sector and employment instability. The withdrawal of support from the middle class, in addition to the increasingly incapacitated and unwilling state, makes it exceedingly difficult for the disadvantaged to make claims that social welfare is their right as citizens, not private property. Taken together, the neoliberal restructuring of social relations vacates the core of democratic politics—the public articulation of political demands—by obscuring the locus at which demands are to be directed, displacing social connections based on mutual reliance and shared responsibilities, and undermining the legitimacy and efficiency of public enterprises.

In South Korea, a similar combination of elitist politics and neoliberalism contributes to the instrumentalization of democracy. Although mass mobilization was more directly responsible for the collapse of the authoritarian regime in South Korea, the institutionalization of democracy was dominated, as in Chile, by political elites. After the June 29 Declaration in 1987, eight representatives from the ruling Democratic Justice Party and the opposing Reunification Democratic Party drafted a new constitution in a matter of three months, completely ruling out popular demands

represented, for instance, by the National Movement Headquarter for Democratic Constitution (*Kukmin Woondong Bonboo*)—a coalition of some twenty-six major civil society groups that played a major role in mobilizing protests leading up to the June 29 Declaration. That the political opening in this “founding moment” was quickly transformed to closed-door negotiations between existing political parties is indicative of the deeply troubling relationship between political parties and the broader popular sector that would define Korean democracy in the years to come. It is troubling not only because one of the parties that were involved in the drafting of a new constitution represented the military regime. Rather, the real problem is that *all* the major political parties existing at the time were highly conservative in their structure as well as policy orientations. This is not surprising considering that all of them (or their forbears) came into being within the Cold War context and in the aftermath of a traumatic war with North Korea and that they had to survive under the authoritarian regimes whose *raison d’être* was anti-communism. Thus, at the time of transition political parties lacked the ability as well as the propensity to represent popular aspirations that had been forming throughout the struggle for democracy.

The unresponsive nature of political parties manifested itself from the very beginning of the transition when the Reunification Democratic Party imploded before presidential election and, despite extraordinary pressure from its popular base, failed to produce a single opposition candidate. As a result, Roh Tae Woo, former general and a confidant of Chun Doo Hwan, was elected president with 36.6 percent of the popular vote, while two prominent opposition candidates, Kim Young Sam (YS) and Kim Dae Jung (DJ), won 28 percent and 27 percent of the vote, respectively. The growing rift between party elites and the popular sector was revealed, and institutionalized, most dramatically in 1989 when YS made a secret deal to merge his Reunification Democratic Party with Roh’s Democratic Justice Party and to create a

“grand conservative coalition.” Thanks to this coalition YS went on to be elected president in 1993. While the YS government successfully regained civilian control over the military and waged a notable anti-corruption campaign to the surprise of many worrying observers,<sup>90</sup> its alliance with key members of the authoritarian regime cast a long shadow on the subsequent development of Korean democracy. Most importantly, the split within the democratic opposition between YS and DJ fundamentally transformed the political cleavage structure from a confrontation between authoritarianism and democracy to a competition between two regions represented by the two Kims. Instead of engaging in a sustained discussion of the direction of democracy in response to popular demands, political parties mobilized people through the manipulation of bias. In so doing, they diverted people’s focus and energy from the crucial task of overcoming legacies of the authoritarian past, present not just in the composition of political elites but entrenched more deeply in general social relations.<sup>91</sup>

The separation of political elites and the popular sector—and the politics of regionalism as its blatant manifestation—served to perpetuate and reinforce profoundly unequal social relations inherited from the authoritarian regime. This problem is exemplified most vividly in business-labor relations. After its early efforts to rectify the Chun regime’s repressive labor law was met with fierce opposition from business that deliberately withheld investment threatening to send the already souring economy into recession, the YS government quickly abandoned its reform agenda and almost faithfully followed the Chun regime’s economic policies, combining anti-labor

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<sup>90</sup> Aurel Croissant, “Riding the Tiger: Civilian Control and the Military in Democratizing Korea,” *Armed Forces & Society* 30(3) (2004): 357-81.

<sup>91</sup> For the politics of regionalism and the conservative bias of Korean democratization, see Jang Jip Choi, *Minjuhwa ehu-ui Minjujuui* [*Democracy after Democratization*] (Seoul: Humanitas, 2005), 95-124; see also Hyug Baeg Im, “Faltering Democratic Consolidation in South Korea: Democracy at the End of the ‘Three Kims’ Era,” *Democratization* 11(5) (2004): 179-198.

policies with the loosening of state control over business. This evidences, to be sure, how powerful business had become vis-à-vis the state by the early 1990s—the trend which, as noted above, was set in motion in the 1980s. But it also shows the consequences of the decoupling of political elites and the broad democratic movement. Mired in the divisive politics of regionalism, no political party could form a unified coalition for democratic reform that was able to challenge the size and coherence of business. While labor took full advantage of the political opening by waging 3,749 strikes in 1987 alone (the total number of strikes *throughout* the authoritarian regimes, 1964-86, was approximately 2893),<sup>92</sup> they were isolated from political parties and reform-minded middle classes and failed to be incorporated into the representative structure of a new democracy. The YS government continued to exclusively recognize and mobilize the Federation of Korean Trade Unions (*Hankuk Nochong*)—a state-sponsored labor organization created in 1963 by the Park government in an attempt to control workers—while ruthlessly suppressing efforts to form independent unions. Even as labor achieved considerable progress in such matters as wage increases and the improvement of the working conditions, as a political group they were dismissed as parochial, militant, and thus illegitimate.<sup>93</sup>

The marginalization of labor within the structure of political representation had far-reaching consequences on the dynamics between social forces, especially after the financial crisis in 1997-98 when South Korea had to restructure its economy in accordance with the neoliberal doctrine under the guidance of the IMF. The crisis, and the ensuing neoliberal restructuring, came at a time that may have well been a turning point in the history of Korean democracy. Kim Dae Jung, who, unlike Kim Young Sam, was isolated from existing elites and retained a closer tie to broader segments of

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<sup>92</sup> Figures extracted from Koo, *Korean Workers*, 159.

<sup>93</sup> Sunhyuk Kim, “State and Civil Society in South Korea’s Democratic Consolidation: Is the Battle Really Over?” *Asian Survey* 37(12) (1997), 1143.



the democratic opposition, won the presidential election in the midst of the unfolding crisis. Also, the financial crisis occurred on the heels of two major events that expressed the solidarity and social recognition that organized labor had achieved: a long-delayed and still illegal foundation of independent national labor organization (*Minju Nochong*, MN) in 1995, and a remarkably successful general strike in the winter of 1996-97 that led to the withdrawal of the new labor law that ruling party legislators passed at dawn in the absence of the opposition party. Together, these events offered a rare opportunity to transform the constricted structure of political representation, but the neoliberal restructuring of the economy prohibited the realization of such a transformation. As discussed above, one of the central tenets of neoliberalism is the enhancement of labor market flexibility, which, in practical terms, means massive layoffs and the proliferation of highly unstable employment. In the face of national crisis, labor was forced to accept that consequence with little to no social protection. In a Tripartite Commission that the DJ government established between labor, business, and the state in an attempt to find a consensual solution to the economic crisis, organized labor ended up giving employers the right to fire workers for “legitimate managerial reasons” and to hire contingent workers in exchange for the legal recognition of the MN—the right to which workers are entitled in any democratic society. This was a self-defeating “deal” on the part of organized labor, insofar as the rapid increase in the number of contingent workers who are fragmented, insecure, and constantly shifting jobs *structurally* undermined its basis, thereby rendering *legal* recognition increasingly empty. Not surprisingly, the rate of unionization, having peaked at 18.6 percent in 1989, continued to decline and went below 10 percent in 2005.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Kwang-Young Shin, “Globalization and the Working Class in South Korea: Contestation, Fragmentation, and Renewal,” *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 40(2) (2010): 211-229, 224.

The political structure skewed toward business thus remains unchallenged, which affects not just workers but broader state-society relations. Its impact is felt, for instance, in the perpetuation of the extremely weak social welfare system even as economic volatility and deepening inequality are emerging as reality. Social welfare expenditures under the authoritarian regimes were virtually negligible (under six percent of the GDP throughout the 1970s and 1980s, as compared to other countries of a similar level of economic development, such as Brazil and Chile, that spent way over 30 percent). While the DJ government did significantly raise social welfare expenditures to about 10 percent of the GDP, it was largely in response to the social unraveling caused by the financial crisis (between 1997 and 1998 the number of unemployed persons soared from 672,000 to 1.81 million) and hardly initiated a structural change. The structure of South Korea's social welfare system is still overwhelmingly private, meaning individuals purchase their insurance as their income allows. One can get a sense of this structure by dividing the amount of money individuals spend to purchase various types of insurance by the amount of money the state spend on social welfare policies. The result roughly shows the distribution of responsibilities between the state and the private sector in the realm of social welfare (the bigger the ratio, the larger role that "the market" plays in social welfare). While the ratio varies from 13 percent (Sweden) to 52.4 percent (United States), it is staggering 138.7 percent in South Korea (in 2002).<sup>95</sup> As we have seen in the case of Chile, the privatized welfare system marginalizes the disadvantaged who cannot afford private services, exacerbates social segmentation, and displaces social problems to the private domain—thereby making it increasingly difficult for people to articulate their needs into *public* demands.

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<sup>95</sup> Hochul Sonn, *Haebang 60 Nyunui Hankuk Jeongchi, 1945-2005* [The Sixty Years of Korean Politics after Independence, 1945-2005] (Seoul: Imagine, 2006), 231, 246-257.

In Chile and South Korea, there are worrying signs that post-transition politics may be degenerating into instrumental democracy. While it is certainly no small achievement that both countries succeeded in securing a transition from some of the harshest authoritarian regimes to a stable electoral democracy, Chile and South Korea seem to be moving *away* from an inclusive representative structure and equal social relations conducive to participation, eroding the basis of a more robust democracy envisioned and aspired under the authoritarian regime. As democratic governments define more issues as technical or private and push them out of the political realm, people are bound to feel that a rotation of elites—which, they are told, *is* democracy—makes little difference to their lives. Any attempt to substantiate democracy in Chile and South Korea must acknowledge this sense of irrelevance as a serious threat that has deep roots in tendencies toward instrumental democracy that both countries have so far reinforced or, at least, failed to challenge.

### **Democracy's Century and Its Predicaments**

Democratization in Chile and South Korea preceded the fall of the Berlin Wall. After the breakdown of the Soviet Union, the wave of democratization spread, at an almost explosive pace, to farther corners of the world. While domestic demands for democracy was certainly strong in all democratizing countries, they were under the extraordinary pressure of international forces I have identified in the first section—the United States and multilateral lending institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank—in determining the course and nature of their democracies. These international agents almost unanimously modeled their understanding of democratization upon the Third Wave and prescribed a combination of electoral politics and the neoliberal strand of the capitalist economy as a universal solution. As Thomas Carothers noted (though without including the effective imposition of neoliberalism as the constitutive

element of the Third Wave), “[a]s the third wave spread to Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, sub-Saharan Africa, and elsewhere in the 1990s, democracy promoters extended this [Third Wave] model as a universal paradigm for understanding democratization. It became ubiquitous in U.S. policy circles as a way of talking about, thinking about, and designing interventions in processes of political change around the world.”<sup>96</sup>

Democracy promotion, which is growing in size and becoming more systematic after the end of the Cold War, has caused a great deal of uneasiness among observers. The obvious danger lies in the possible abuse of democracy promotion as the pretext for enhancing U.S. interests. Nowhere was this danger revealed more manifestly than in George W. Bush’s “freedom agenda.” In his second inaugural address, Bush remarked that “[t]he survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands” and pledged to “seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world.”<sup>97</sup> While democracy promotion is “not primarily the task of arms,” he continued, the United States will “defend ourselves and our friends by force of arms when necessary” and “persistently clarify the choice before every ruler and every nation, the moral choice between oppression, which is always wrong, and freedom, which is eternally right.”<sup>98</sup> It is hard to see how democracy “clarified” by the external force as the only moral option corresponds to the ideal of the “rule of the people.” And what happened in Iraq shortly afterwards has done little to lend credence to the claim that the United States’ commitment to democracy promotion is principled, not strategic. Critics are also worried that

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<sup>96</sup> Thomas Carothers, “The End of the Transition Paradigm,” *Journal of Democracy* 13(1) (2002), 6.

<sup>97</sup> George W. Bush, “[Second] Inaugural Address,” January 20, 2005, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, 2005*, 66.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 66-67.

democracy promotion, equating democracy and capitalism, might be appropriated as an excuse that shields neoliberal capitalism from challenges. The unilateral imposition of the neoliberal model by plutocratic and undemocratic organizations such as the IMF and the World Bank that often accompanies democratization in developing countries severely constrains individual countries' power with regard to their major economic policies and their social impact.

My analysis of the Chilean and South Korean experience points to yet another danger of democracy promotion modeled upon the Third Wave. The combination of elite-centered electoral politics and the neoliberal restructuring of social relations has systematic tendencies to instrumentalize democracy, which is fundamentally at odds with people's democratic aspirations. Ivan Krastev finds a similar trend in the Central and Eastern European contexts. The desire to be "normal," Krastev argues, made Central and Eastern European leaders too readily equate democracy with both liberalism and capitalism, ignoring people's rising dissatisfaction. In doing so, however, they lost an integral element of democracy. As he puts it:

"Democracy is a federation whose constituent republics constantly squabble over and renegotiate their shared borders. Democracy is a self-correcting regime that is sustained by its own contradictions ... Democracy's advantage over authoritarianism lies not in some inherent democratic ability to offer citizens instant gratification of their needs and desires, but rather in democracy's superior institutional and intellectual readiness to cope with the dissatisfaction produced by its citizens' choices ... By defining democracy as the natural state of society while limiting the sanctioned policy choices available to the public, the post-1989 consensus paradoxically undercut this very basic advantage of democratic regimes."<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Ivan Krastev, "Deepening Dissatisfaction," *Journal of Democracy* 21(1) (2010), 118.

## **PART III**

### **The Affective Basis of Democracy**

## CHAPTER 5

### **Toward a Theory of Democratic Disaffection: Arendt between Heidegger and Marx**

“Insofar as totalitarian movements have sprung up in the non-totalitarian world (crystallizing elements found in that world, since totalitarian governments have not been imported from the moon), the process of understanding is clearly, and perhaps primarily, also a process of self-understanding.”

--Hannah Arendt (1954)<sup>1</sup>

My inquiry in preceding chapters indicates that, as opposed to the rationalist paradigm's presumption, the affective basis of democracy is seriously undermined in the postwar era as instrumental democracy penetrates into the concept and practice of democracy. Instrumental democracy places power to determine political goals beyond the reach of democratic contestation and instead within the hands of elites and technocrats who lack democratic legitimacy as well as accountability; it represses collective organization and action, dissolving the demos into manageable individual units; and it identifies democracy with a self-regulating mechanism, effectively eliminating the need for human agency. Troubling signs of disaffection plaguing both old and new democracies today compel us to recognize and challenge the working of instrumental democracy that circumscribes the scope of democratic politics and ultimately renders the working of democracy irrelevant to ordinary people who are increasingly forced to address vital issues of their life as isolated individuals rather than members of the community.

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<sup>1</sup> Hannah Arendt, “Understanding and Politics,” in *Essays in Understanding, 1930-1954*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken, 1994), 310.

In this chapter, I bring my empirical analysis of postwar democracy into theoretical focus and conceptualize the relationship between instrumental democracy and democratic disaffection by reinterpreting the work of Hannah Arendt in light of the genealogy of postwar democracy.<sup>2</sup> Although Arendt's political theory was profoundly shaped, like Cold War theories of democracy, by the traumatic experience of totalitarianism, it offers a powerful critique of instrumental democracy. In direct opposition to her contemporaries' claims, she identified a specific kind of *depoliticization*—the disappearance of the public sphere, the dissolution of collectivities, and crucially the decline of people's democratic dispositions—as the essential characteristic of totalitarianism and the most serious threat to democratic politics. Believing such depoliticization is not peculiar to totalitarianism but inherent in modernity itself, Arendt set out to understand the *nature* and the *origin* of that depoliticization with her concepts of “world alienation” and “the social,” respectively. This chapter aims to elucidate these two crucial concepts.

As noted in the Introduction, by reinterpreting the concepts of world alienation and the social I attempt to navigate the tension at the center of Arendt's political theory (reflected in a rather bifurcated reception of her theory) between, on the one hand, her unique concept of “action” characterized by spontaneity and unpredictability and, on the other hand, her emphasis on the political stability guaranteed by public institutions. I suggest that, in Arendt's political thinking, public institutions and public actions are not fundamentally opposed but mediated by public sentiments and dispositions. For Arendt, both institutions and actions are sustained and animated by the same set of dispositions to *preserve* and *recreate* publicness, which she variably calls “the common world,” “the public sphere,” or “the space of appearance.” From

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<sup>2</sup> References to Arendt's works given as follows: to *The Origins of Totalitarianism* as OT; to *The Human Condition* as HC; to *Between Past and Future* as BPF; to *On Revolution* as OR; to *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* as LKPP.



this perspective, the counterproductive opposition between institutions and actions are not a theoretical necessity but a *historically contingent phenomenon* caused by the decay of public sentiments and dispositions, namely, democratic disaffection. And as I will demonstrate, Arendt's critique of the "the social" points to a historically specific *structural* dynamic that produces democratic disaffection—a dynamic inherent in modernity and manifesting itself aggressively in the postwar period.

For reasons elaborated in the Introduction, my contention that Arendt offers a critique of democratic disaffection and an account of its structural origin might appear counterintuitive. She notoriously dismissed one of the most influential affective concepts in the history of political thought, namely, Rousseau's "compassion." Nor is she known for her attention to structural problems. Thus, I should emphasize that I intend my interpretation of Arendt in this Chapter to be the work of *reconstruction*. I collect a set of ideas on which Arendt implicitly relies in developing her political theory and give shape to those ideas in a way that enables us to conceptualize the affective basis of democratic politics. As these ideas exist in Arendt's thinking only in a vague and underdeveloped fashion, I enlist two external sources to flesh out and articulate them: Martin Heidegger and Karl Marx. While there is ample reason to believe Arendt develops some of her crucial insights through her engagement with, and critical appropriation of, Heidegger and Marx, my primary concern is not to trace the intellectual influence of these two thinkers on Arendt in a comprehensive manner.<sup>3</sup> My use of Heidegger and Marx is limited to elucidating Arendt's concepts of world alienation and the social. I hope, however, that my attempt to link their insights in the

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<sup>3</sup> There are numerous works that examine Heidegger's influence on Arendt. See Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996), esp. 51-61, 102-122; Dana R. Villa, *Arendt and Heidegger: The Fate of the Political* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Jacques Taminiaux, *The Thracian Maid and the Professional Thinker*, trans. and ed. Michael Gendre (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997). It is more difficult to trace Marx's influence, especially because Arendt often drew a sharp distinction between her ideas and Marx's. For an attempt to find resonances between Arendt and Marx, see Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *The Attack of the Blob: Hannah Arendt's Concept of the Social* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), chap. 7.

work of Arendt initiates a fruitful dialogue that has rarely been conducted between intellectual traditions inspired by the two extremely influential and complex thinkers.

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first section discusses Arendt's influential account of totalitarianism. I demonstrate that her arguments are diametrically opposed to the Cold War strand of anti-totalitarianism in analyzing the masses not as the ontologically dangerous entity to be depoliticized but as the historically specific mode of political existence emerging from a particular kind of depoliticization. Arendt believed that this depoliticization was not the exclusive attribute of totalitarian governments and made major efforts to understand it in the non-totalitarian context. The second and third sections trace and reconstruct these efforts, focusing on her concepts of world alienation and the social, respectively. The second section analyzes the concept of world alienation to illuminate the nature of depoliticization. Arendt tends to equate the destruction of the common world with the decay of what she calls "common sense" without sufficient explanation. I address this interpretive puzzle by examining Arendt's claims in light of Heidegger's idea that our existence relies on primary affective attunement, and suggest that world alienation does not simply refer to institutional change but to a dispositional and affective transformation. The last section reconstructs the concept of the social as a historical critique of the origin of depoliticization. While suggesting that the decline of care for the world and the concomitant rise of care about the self is the outcome of historically specific processes, Arendt never develops this insight and, worse, sometimes harbors a purely conceptual criticism that contradicts the implication of her own ideas. Despite her almost oddly misguided rejection, I suggest Marx's critique of capitalism helps elucidate the dynamic of the social—how it at once subsumes all human actions under the imperative of wealth accumulation and suppresses the realization of political freedom.

## Totalitarianism and the Fate of Politics

It is difficult to understand Arendt's unique—and at times enigmatic—political theory without examining how profoundly her experience of totalitarianism shaped her thinking.<sup>4</sup> But since totalitarianism cast a powerful spell on Cold War political theory in general, it is important to stress that Arendt's critique of totalitarianism was completely different from hardheaded anti-totalitarianism predominant at the time. To be sure, much fanfare surrounded *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) because Arendt's argument was understood to confirm a thesis that there exist inherent affinities between totalitarianism and the masses—a thesis that, as discussed in Chapter 2, was gathering enormous momentum in Cold War America. And some of the passages in *Origins* did highlight a close connection between totalitarianism and the masses. Arendt argued, for instance, that “[t]otalitarian movements are mass organizations of atomized, isolated individuals” characterized by their demand for “total, unrestricted, unconditional, and unalterable loyalty of the individual member” and that “[s]uch loyalty can be expected only from the completely isolated human being ... without any other social ties to family, friends, comrades, or even mere acquaintances” (OT 323; see also 311). Citing Hitler, she went so far as to portray the relationship between the totalitarian leader and the masses as one of inextricable interdependence. “All that you are, you are through me; all that I am, I am through you alone” (OT 325).

But unlike her contemporaries who dismissed the masses as inherently irrational and violent on an *ontological* basis, Arendt viewed the masses as the

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<sup>4</sup> In this respect, I agree with Margaret Canovan that Arendt's experience of totalitarianism sets the agenda of her entire political thought and that many of her arguments become more intelligible only when her conceptualization of totalitarianism is precisely understood. Margaret Canovan, *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 7.

*historical* outcome of the disintegration of social structures and political institutions. In particular, she placed great emphasis on the breakdown of the class structure after the First World War and the failure of the party system to integrate and represent the majority of the population. As she puts it, “[t]he fall of protecting class walls transformed the slumbering majorities behind all parties into one great unorganized, structureless mass of furious individuals.” Totalitarian movements mobilized these once politically indifferent people “whom all the other parties had given up as too apathetic or stupid for their attention ... [and] who had reason to be equally hostile to all parties” (OT 315, 311-312). “Stand[ing] outside all social ramifications and normal political representation,” like “the mob” in nineteenth-century France, the masses were conditioned to hate “society from which it is excluded, as well as Parliament where it is not represented” and directed, at the smallest nudge, their resentment at whatever group (e.g., Jews) that was believed to enjoy the privileges of inclusion and representation (OT 314, 107). Arendt suggests, in direct opposition to the claims of many Cold War intellectuals, that the political ignorance and apathy was neither the primary source of totalitarianism nor the inherent attribute of the masses. “Indifference to public affairs,” she wrote, is “no sufficient cause for the rise of totalitarian movements.” Indeed, “apathy and even hostility toward public life” was the main feature of the bourgeois society in which a way of life was “so insistently and exclusively centered on the individual’s success or failure in ruthless competition that a citizen’s duties and responsibilities could only be felt to be a needless drain on his limited time and energy” (OT 313). Rather, the real danger lay in the way in which the masses’ apathy was left unattended and exploited.

In “Ideology and Terror,” which was written in 1953 and added to all subsequent editions of *Origins*, Arendt provided a more general account of how the masses emerged as the driving force of totalitarianism. Her analysis relies on two

major concepts, “isolation” and “loneliness,” which correspond to the political sphere and broader social relations, respectively. First of all, Arendt argues that totalitarianism—and “terror” that operates as the governing mechanism in place of positive law—is predicated upon “isolation” as its “most fertile ground.” Isolation paves the ground for totalitarianism by destroying the public sphere where people “act together in the pursuit of a common concern.” Since “power always comes from men acting together,” Arendt writes, “isolated men are powerless by definition” (OT 474). But isolation, and powerlessness as its effect, is characteristic of all tyrannies; what makes totalitarianism a truly new form of political life is that it is based on “loneliness,” on the “experience of not belonging to the world at all, which is among the most radical and desperate experiences of man” (OT 475; see also 478). Loneliness is fundamentally different from isolation. While politically debilitating, a certain level of isolation is required for men’s creative, productive activities through which they “add something of their own to the common world.” In this temporary state of isolation, people are still “in contact with the world” even as they are distanced from other people (OT 474-475). Loneliness, however, undermines the deepest root of human existence by destroying a “common world” that provides stability and meaning to the moderns’ uprooted and superfluous being—the state of being which is “the curse of modern masses since the beginning of the industrial revolution” (OT 475).

What Arendt calls the “common world” proves to be a complex concept that undergirds her political theory, and I will examine it more closely in the next section. For now it is important to note two related consequences of the loss of the common world. First, the worldless and homeless state of the masses caused by the disappearance of the common world gave rise to a peculiar psychological state. As all social connections and common bonds disintegrated, people came to view structural problems exclusively in terms of individual failure or specific injustice. Failing to find

channels for public articulation, people's discontent with the political and social system thus became "self-centered bitterness" which, "although repeated again and again in individual isolation," was "not a common bond" (OT 315). Numbed by the repeated experience of helplessness, the masses finally came to lose the very instinct for their own welfare and self-preservation. They became, as Arendt described, "selfless" in the sense that "oneself does not matter ... [and is] expendable" (OT 315). Second, because they could not identify with existing political and social institutions, the masses were strongly drawn to ideologies that promised, in the name of the infallible law of Nature or History, a total transformation—the inevitable demise of the existing world and the emergence of a new one. Combined with their peculiar selflessness, the masses' hatred toward the existing social order drove them to willingly lose and sacrifice themselves for a violent cause. "The peculiar selflessness of the mass man appeared here as yearning for anonymity, for being just a number and functioning only as a cog, for every transformation, in brief, which would wipe out the spurious identifications with specific types or predetermined functions within society. War had been experienced as that "mightiest of all mass actions" which obliterated individual differences so that even suffering, which traditionally had marked off individuals through unique unexchangeable destinies, could now be interpreted as "an instrument of historical progress" (OT 329).

While enthusiastically receiving Arendt's theory of totalitarianism, many Cold War intellectuals treated her account of the masses as a description of the *ontological fact*, losing sight of her broader argument that the masses were a *historical state* challenging us to reflect critically on political choices made and social processes involved. But as we have seen, Arendt's critique was directed not simply at the masses as such but, more fundamentally, at the process through which the masses came into being as a dominant mode of political existence. Seen from this point of view, what is

as crucial as her analysis of totalitarianism is her insights into Weimer democracy's self-destructive failure to rectify historically produced social relations that bred the masses—namely, the uprooted and superfluous mode of existence generated, over time, by the industrial revolution, the imperialist expansion of capitalism, and the collapse of the class structure after the First World War. Indeed, Arendt pointed out that the unexpected success of totalitarianism shattered two “illusions” about democracy. The first illusion presumed that in a democracy the majority of the population would actively participate in politics through the medium of political parties. Totalitarianism showed, however, that “the politically neutral and indifferent masses could easily be the majority in a democratically ruled country.” The second illusion held that “these politically indifferent masses did not matter” and that “they constituted no more than the inarticulate backward setting for the political life of the nation.” But again, totalitarianism laid bare the fact that “democratic government had rested as much on the silent approbation and tolerance of the indifferent and inarticulate sections of the people as on the articulate and visible institutions and organizations of society” (OT 312). The experience of totalitarianism warns us, in other words, that democracy is in grave danger when the majority of the population is detached from its institutions and social functions—namely, when people are disaffected with democracy.

Arendt's concern with the failure of politics also informs her diagnosis of the *working* of totalitarianism, which, like her analysis of the masses, departs markedly from her contemporaries'. While Cold War political theory often portrayed totalitarianism as a total politicization of all aspects of life, Arendt understood it as the exact opposite: a total destruction of politics. It is important to emphasize her primary concern was the fate of *politics*, because her critique of totalitarianism powerfully, though in a completely different sense, invoked the same terms that figured most

prominently in the Cold War indictment of totalitarianism, namely, “individuality” and “spontaneity.” For example, in her disturbing account of the concentration camps (“laboratories in which the fundamental belief of totalitarianism ... is being verified”), Arendt argued that “[t]he [concentration] camps are meant not only to exterminate people and degrade human beings, but also serve the ghastly experiment of eliminating, under scientifically controlled conditions, spontaneity itself [which is] man’s power to begin something new out of his own resources, something that cannot be explained on the basis of reactions to environment and events.” The outcome, as described by Arendt, is almost too outrageous to accept: “Nothing then remains but ghastly marionettes with human faces, which all behave like the dog in Pavlov’s experiments, which all react with perfect reliability even when going to their own death, and which do nothing but react. This is the real triumph of the [totalitarian] system” (OT 436, 438, 455).

Terminological resonances notwithstanding, Arendt’s defense of individuality and spontaneity cannot be farther from the Cold War consecration of individual freedom promoted, most notably, by Hayek. For starters, her critique of isolation and loneliness as the breeding ground of totalitarianism should clarify that she does not champion individuality in the exclusive sense of separation from other people. But more importantly, we need to take into account Arendt’s broader argument in which her defense of individuality is situated. In her analysis, the annihilation of individuality is understood as the final stage of totalitarian domination closely intertwined with two preceding stages. The first stage is the dissolution or transmutation of the laws. By operating the concentration camps outside the normal penal system, totalitarianism constructed an arbitrary legal order that abolishes the need for people’s consent on the law. The “arbitrary arrest,” Arendt states, “destroys the validity of free consent” and, in doing so, destroys the civil rights not simply of



“criminals, political opponents, Jews, homosexuals” but of “the whole population” that “ultimately become[s] just as outlawed in their own country as the stateless and homeless” (OT 451). In this respect, totalitarianism’s true “criminality” lies not in “simple aggressiveness, ruthlessness, warfare and treachery” but in “a conscious break of that *consensus iuris* which, according to Cicero, constitutes “a people”” (OT 462). Totalitarianism, then, marks a fundamental shift in the nature of law. According to Arendt, positive laws have traditionally served a double function of both allowing individuals to freely initiate new, unpredictable events in the political world *and* providing stability to the constant flux caused by such initiations. As she puts it, “[t]he laws hedge in each new beginning and at the same time assure its freedom of movement” (OT 465). Under totalitarianism, however, “all laws ... become laws of movement”—inexorable and superhuman laws executed in the form of race war or class struggles (OT 463). Now in place of positive laws, “terror” governs in totalitarianism in order to ensure that “the force of nature or of history ... race freely through mankind, unhindered by any spontaneous human action” (OT 465). In detaching the *legitimacy* of the laws from people’s consent, moreover, totalitarianism divorces the *realization* of the laws from human action. As Arendt argues, if totalitarianism can function “without the *consensus iuris*,” that is because it “promises to release the fulfillment of law from all action and will of man” (OT 462).

The realm of human action is further reduced, in the second stage, by what Arendt calls the “murder of the moral person in man.” The “great accomplishment” of totalitarianism, she writes, lay in the fact that they had made “martyrdom, for the first time in history, impossible.” As Arendt remarks, citing David Rousset’s *Les Jours de Notre Mort* on which she heavily draws in her discussion of the concentration camps, acts of resistance such as martyrdom “must have social meaning” in order to take effect. Totalitarianism destroyed the precondition for that social meaning by

“corrupt[ing] all human solidarity” (OT 451). It is to be noted that these two stages of totalitarian domination, which paved ground for the destruction of individuality as such, are centered on collectivity or solidarity (in the first stage, *consensus iuris* is presented not as an aggregation of individual consent but as a collective subjectivity; in the second stage, what happens is not simply a weakening of individual courage or will but a corruption of solidarity). Arendt’s confrontation with totalitarianism, in other words, led her to the conclusion fundamentally opposed to the exclusive concern with individual freedom and the dismissal of collective subjectivities characteristic of Cold War theories of democracy.

While discussing the mob in the context of the Dreyfus affair as the excluded, “homeless,” segment of the population like the masses, Arendt once spoke of the “fundamental error of regarding the mob as identical with rather than a caricature of the people” (OT 106-107). This error was committed by disgruntled young intellectuals who, despite their contempt for people, saw in the mob primitive “strength” which they believed was necessary for the fervent nationalism they championed. But the same error also plagued defenders of Dreyfus like Clemenceau who condemned the mob and the people alike as “a collective tyrant” (OT 112-113). In falling prey to this error, Arendt laments, Clemenceau let his “despair of the people” and his belief “that he and he alone could save the republic” overtake his belief in the republican ideal and, in doing so, “cut the ground from under his feet, and forced himself into that grim aloofness which thereafter distinguished him” (OT 115). What both nationalists and republicans missed, in Arendt’s logic, was the fact that the mob was not an inherent characteristic of people but a mode of existence produced by historical conditions and political failures. Startled by the destructive force of the masses, Cold War intellectuals made a similar mistake of criticizing the masses as a *naturally* violent entity while losing sight of the *historical process* through which

people came to assume the “mass mode.” If, as Arendt argues, the masses arise from a specific kind of depoliticization, the crucial task is not to continue but to reverse such a depoliticizing tendency.

Thus viewed, Arendt’s account of totalitarianism constitutes a powerful critique of instrumental democracy that places crucial issues outside democratic politics and suppresses the formation of collectivities, perpetuating the root cause of the “massification” of people. Of course, one might protest that this reading is an unacceptable stretch. Arendt discussed totalitarianism and its depoliticizing tendencies within specific contexts of Nazism and Stalinism. How can we apply her critique of totalitarianism to the postwar development of democracy without committing serious categorical errors? I answer that, first, the chief concern of Arendt’s political theory is not the form of government but the form of experience and, second, central themes of *Origins*—especially the destruction of the common world—reappear in her later works as a key and perilous tendency of modernity. In this respect, it is suggestive that Arendt ends *Origins* by warning that “totalitarian solutions may well survive the fall of totalitarian regimes (OT 459).” In “Ideology and Terror,” she reiterates the very same point by saying that the “crisis of our century” manifested in totalitarianism is “no mere threat from outside” and “will no more disappear with the death of Stalin than it disappeared with the fall of Nazi Germany.” The “true predicaments of our time,” Arendt proclaims, “will assume their authentic form ... only when totalitarianism become a thing of the past” (OT 460)—a thing of the past, she could have added, that is forgotten, misunderstood, and most dangerously, exploited for political purposes.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Writing in 1954, Arendt recognized the fact that “[t]he popular use of the word “totalitarianism” for the purpose of some supreme political evil is not much more than about five years old.” Arendt, “Understanding and Politics,” 311.

## **World Alienation: Arendt and Heidegger**

Arendt's concern was not that totalitarianism would reappear in the exact same form; she repeatedly emphasized that totalitarianism was a unique experience tied to Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union under Stalin. Rather, the danger lies in relegating totalitarianism to "a thing of the past" while believing that the "crisis of our century" disappeared along with it. The decline of the common world—and, concomitantly, the rise of the masses as the dominant mode of political existence—was certainly accelerated and exploited by totalitarian movements, but it was caused first of all by structural changes inherent in modernity. Unless we develop a precise understanding of those changes and find ways to properly address them, the "true predicaments of our time" persist, waiting to take "their authentic form." As the epigraph I cited at the beginning of this chapter makes clear, Arendt was concerned primarily with understanding and overcoming "crystallizing elements" of totalitarianism *in the non-totalitarian world*. Not the reappearance of totalitarianism *per se* but the persistence of its breeding ground (which could give rise to various forms of political pathologies), I would suggest, is the central concern that guides and motivates Arendt's political theory.

In *The Human Condition* (1958), often regarded as the most systematic account of Arendt's political theory, she introduces the term "world alienation" to discuss the loss of the common world as a more general phenomenon. What is immediately clear about Arendt's concept of the common world—which she also calls the "public realm" or the "space of appearance"—is that it refers to commonly shared, stable, and lasting institutions and objects constructed by human beings. This aspect of the world is already clear from her emphasis on legal institutions in *Origins*: "[positive laws] guarantee the pre-existence of a common world" (OT 465). She makes a similar point in *The Human Condition*: "The world ... is common to all of us and

distinguished from our privately owned place in it. This world ... is not identical with the earth or with nature ... It is related, rather, to the human artifact, the fabrication of human hands, as well as to affairs which go on among those who inhabit the man-made world together. To live together in the world means essentially that a world of things is between those who have it in common” (HC 52).

This, however, is but one aspect of the common world. The other, possibly more important, aspect of the common world is our sense of reality or what she calls “our feeling for reality” (HC 51, 50). Arendt’s invocation of affective categories (“feeling”) as the defining quality of reality will receive a more detailed discussion shortly, but we first need to examine why she emphasizes the significance of reality or, more basically, what she means by reality. Her emphasis on the political significance of reality comes from her recognition that the completely unprecedented nature of totalitarianism renders categories of traditional political philosophy fundamentally inadequate. As she states, totalitarianism “constitute[s] a break with all our traditions ... [and] ha[s] clearly exploded our categories of political thought and moral judgment.”<sup>6</sup> The core problem is that conventional classifications such as tyranny, aristocracy, and democracy are centered almost exclusively on the question of sovereignty (who rules?) without attending to the fundamental experience upon which political systems are founded. For Arendt, traditional political philosophy’s obsession with sovereignty, accompanied by its tendency to equate freedom with sovereignty, is reflective of its failure to consider plurality as the most fundamental condition of politics. “Under human conditions, which are determined by the fact that not man but men live on the earth, freedom and sovereignty are so little identical that they cannot even exist simultaneously” (BPF 164). This critical awareness leads Arendt to highlight non-

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 309-310.

sovereign, experiential dimensions of politics throughout her works—a relentless position that would provoke a good deal of confusion, controversy, and criticism.

In her attempt to shift the focus of political inquiry, Arendt draws on Montesquieu's distinction between the "nature" and the "principle" of government.<sup>7</sup> In *The Spirit of the Laws*, Montesquieu wrote: "There is this difference between the nature of the government and its principle: its nature is that which makes it what it is, and its principle, that which makes it act. The one is its particular structure, and the other is the human passions that set it in motion."<sup>8</sup> According to Montesquieu, while a tyranny is defined by the fact that power is concentrated in one person, actions (of both tyrants and subjects) in a tyrannical political system are inspired by fear. Likewise, honor inspires actions in a monarchy, and virtue in a republic. Seen from the Montesquieuan perspective, then, lawfulness that Arendt emphasizes as the essence of government at once allowing and "hedging in" political freedom is only partially significant. As she summarily states, "Lawfulness sets limitations to actions, but does not inspire them." Thus politics relies additionally on a "principle" that "would inspire government and citizens alike in their public activity and serve as a criterion, beyond the merely negative yardstick of lawfulness, for judging all action in public affairs" (OT 467). As the "positive" foundation of action, principle shares a tragic fate with its negative counterpart (laws) in totalitarianism's brutal war against all elements of action. As conventional laws are replaced with laws of Nature or History, "in totalitarian governments Montesquieu's principle of action is replaced by ideology."<sup>9</sup> Now, ideology is a peculiar thing. Ideologies, Arendt argues, claim to "explain

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<sup>7</sup> Arendt argues that Montesquieu's distinction shows that "[t]he concrete actions of each government and of the citizens living under the various forms of government cannot be explained in accordance with the two conceptual pillars of traditional definition of power as the distinction between ruling and being ruled, and of law as the limitation of such power." Hannah Arendt, "Montesquieu's Revision of Tradition," in *The Promise of Politics*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken, 2005), 63-64.

<sup>8</sup> Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, trans. and eds. Anne M. Cohler, Basia Carolyn Miller, and Harold Samuel Stone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), bk. 3, ch. I.

<sup>9</sup> Hannah Arendt, "On the Nature of Totalitarianism," in *Essays in Understanding*, 355.

everything, past and future, without further concurrence with actual experience.” She calls this tendency of ideologies the “arrogant emancipation from reality” which, in turn, necessitates reliance on terror. Unlike principle that inspires actions and thus embraces unpredictability inherent in such actions, ideology tries to fit everything into predetermined “laws” of Nature or History and to incorporate everyone into the internal logic of those laws as standardized and unthinking cogs. Since such a totalitarian project is in conflict with the “unpredictability ... of man, on the one hand, and the curious inconsistency of the world, on the other,” totalitarianism needs terror which, as discussed above, “freezes men in order to clear the way for the movement of Nature or History.”<sup>10</sup> Seen in this light, Arendt’s emphasis on reality can be seen as a protest and a warning against the danger of ideology which, with its abstract logicity, insulates totalitarian governments from actual human actions and events.<sup>11</sup>

But why does Arendt speak of our “feeling for reality”? To anticipate my conclusion, I suggest that for Arendt our affective attunement with the “space of appearance” *is* reality. This is somewhat at odds with the common use of the term “reality,” which tends to emphasize more immediate and tangible qualities. Nonetheless, there is abundant evidence attesting to the importance of affective categories to Arendt’s conception of reality. It is, for instance, already indicated in her account of Montesquieu. Examining his concept of principle, Arendt takes special note of Montesquieu’s claim that principles such as virtue and honor arise from the “fundamental experience” described to be affective in its nature. “Virtue ... springs from the love of equality, and honor from the love of distinction ... [T]his “love,” or, as we shall say, the fundamental experience from which the principles of action spring,

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 350, 342.

<sup>11</sup> Arendt argues that, in addition to terror, it is logicity provided by ideology that sustains totalitarianism. “Logicity is what appeals to isolated human beings, for man—in complete solitude, without any contact with his fellow-men and therefore without any real possibility of experience—has nothing else he can fall back on but the most abstract rules of reasoning.” Ibid., 357-358.

is for Montesquieu the binding link between the structure of a government represented in the spirit of the laws and the actions of its body politic.”<sup>12</sup> While her invocation of “love” here is largely suggestive and left unexamined, Arendt makes more specific claims in *Origins*, where she often equates the common world with what she calls “common sense.” Consider the following passages:

“Even the experience of the materially and sensually given world depends upon my being in contact with other men, upon our *common* sense which regulates and controls all other senses and without which each of us would be enclosed in his own particularity of sense data which in themselves are unreliable and treacherous. Only because we have common sense, that is only because not one man, but men in the plural inhabit the earth can we trust our immediate sensual experience” (OT 475-476).

“What makes loneliness so unbearable is the loss of one’s own self which can be realized in solitude, but confirmed in its identity only by the *trusting and trustworthy company* of my equals. In this situation, man loses trust in himself as the partner of his thoughts and that *elementary confidence* in the world which is necessary to make experiences at all. Self and world, capacity for thought and experience are lost at the same time” (OT 477, emphasis added).

It is clear from these passages that, for Arendt, tangible qualities of the world (“the materially and sensually given world”) are not sufficient for our experience of reality. We perceive various fragments of the world through our five senses. But without our affective attunement with other people (“common sense” established through “trust” in our equals and the “elementary confidence” in the world), those sense data remain “unreliable and treacherous” and thus are unable to help us actually *register* the world. Here it is important to emphasize that by such terms as “trust” and “confidence” Arendt does not promote submission to the status quo, especially because she

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<sup>12</sup> Arendt, “Montesquieu’s Revision of Tradition,” 66.



sometimes cites the conservative thinker Edmund Burke in discussing the crisis of common sense. She speaks, for instance, of “the revolt of the masses against “realism,” common sense, and all “the plausibilities of the world” (Burke)” (OT 352). Taken out of context, passages like this encourage a conservative reading of the concept common sense. Below I will challenge such a reading and argue that Arendt advances a distinctly *dynamic* theory of common sense. Before doing so, however, let us examine the affective dimension of Arendt’s common sense more closely.

In later works such as *The Human Condition* and *Between Past and Future* (1962), Arendt reiterates her claims about common sense, revealing, however, a possible intellectual source that could help elaborate her ideas. In a typical formulation, Arendt states: “It is by virtue of common sense that the other sense perceptions are known to disclose reality” (HC 208-209; see also BPF 221). Arendt’s use of the term “disclose” in this passage is unmistakably suggestive, as it is the concept at the center of Heidegger’s ontology to which Arendt has a complex and troubled relationship.<sup>13</sup>

Heidegger’s project is to dismantle what he perceives to be the very core of Western philosophy, namely, the Cartesian subject that stands separate from and in opposition to the world (the object) and shapes that world through its reason and will. Challenging this dominant notion, Heidegger posits that our “Being” lies in “Reality” or in “Dasein (literally “being-there”),” meaning that we are who we are due to the fact of our being always already situated in (“thrown into”) a specific time-place and surrounded by things and people.<sup>14</sup> Dasein, in turn, is defined as “an entity which, in its very Being, comports itself understandingly toward that Being” (BT 78). The seeming circularity of this argument is resolved given that, as noted, Dasein is *always*

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<sup>13</sup> For an extended discussion of Arendt’s intellectual relationship with Heidegger, see Villa, *Arendt and Heidegger* and Taminiaux, *The Thracian Maid and the Professional Thinker*.

<sup>14</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 26. Hereafter cited in the text as BT.

*already* embedded in a web of relationships, which exists within “the world” (Heidegger terms the basic state of Dasein “Being-in-the-world”). These relations are “disclosed” to us (albeit in an incomplete and somewhat hidden fashion), and we discover and appropriate those relations not by cognition but by practical involvement (“the less we just stare at the hammer-Thing, and the more we seize hold of it and use it, the more primordial does our relationship to it become, and the more unveiledly is it encountered as that which it is—as equipment,” BT 98). Thus when Heidegger says that “*Dasein is its disclosedness* (BT 171),” he does not attempt to replace reason with disclosedness as our “human nature.” Rather, he suggests that we have no such transcendental nature whatsoever except for the one we can (and thus can fail to) work out of our partially disclosed relations. Our Being, in short, is given to us not as a predetermined quality, but as an *open possibility* that requires our efforts to recognize and realize it. “Dasein always understands itself ... in terms of a possibility of itself ... [Dasein] is *not yet*” (BT 32-33, 185-186). Seen in this light, the crucial question is not to obtain a preconception of the essence of our Being, such as reason, but to understand and realize the “disclosedness” of our Being in which we already “reside” and “dwell” (BT 80). Not knowing but *actually doing something about* constitutive elements of our existence is where the meaning of our life lies. As Heidegger writes somewhat obscurely, “Dasein ‘has’ meaning, so far as the disclosedness of Being-in-the-world can be ‘filled in’ by the entities discoverable in that disclosedness” (BT 193).

While, as we will see shortly, Arendt is vehemently critical of many aspects of Heidegger’s thought, she seems to have recognized some of the significant implications of his ontology.<sup>15</sup> For our purposes, the most important point is that

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<sup>15</sup> The fundamental shift, effected by Heidegger’s ontology, in the focus of philosophical inquiry from human nature to human existence seems to be reflected in the very premise of *The Human Condition*. “Whatever touches or enters into a sustained relationship with human life immediately assumes the character of a condition of human existence. This is why men, no matter what they do, are always conditioned beings ... The impact of world’s reality upon human existence is felt and received as a

Heidegger's ontology gives freedom a radically different meaning. From the Heideggerian point of view, freedom is not a matter of willing or choosing; rather, we are free to the extent that we are keenly aware of, not oblivious to, constitutive elements of our existence and creatively appropriate those elements. As Heidegger puts it, "[f]reedom is not merely ... the caprice, turning up occasionally in our choosing, of inclining in this or that direction. Freedom is not mere absence of constraint with respect to what we can or cannot do. Nor is it on the other hand mere readiness for what is required and necessary ... Prior to all this ("negative" and "positive" freedom), freedom is engagement in the disclosure of being as such."<sup>16</sup> Given that facts of our existence are disclosed to us only incompletely, freedom as the discovering of their disclosedness always takes an active form ("engagement"), but amounts not merely to executing our particular goals (hence distinguished from positive freedom) but to creating a context in which we can begin to form our goals. Freedom, in other words, is tantamount to a creation of the "world," not as a determinate entity but as an open field in which we sow and reap our possibilities. Through our "engagement," Heidegger writes, "the openness of the open region, i.e., the "there" ("Da"), is what it is."<sup>17</sup> Arendt places this "disclosive" conception of freedom—freedom as the creation of the condition of possibility for human existence—at the heart of her political theory. Criticizing the "equation of freedom with the human capacity to will," long dominant in political philosophy, causes us to "almost automatically equate power with oppression or, at least, with rule over others," she redefines freedom as the capacity to "act" or to "call something into being which

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conditioning force. The objectivity of the world—its object- or thing-character—and the human condition supplement each other; because human existence is conditioned existence, it would be impossible without things, and things would be a heap of unrelated articles, a non-world, if they were not the conditions of human existence" (HC 9).

<sup>16</sup> Martin Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth," in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 126.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

did not exist before,” which importantly includes the founding of the public sphere as a context for human action—the point she drives home in *On Revolution* (BPF 162, 151).

Insofar as Arendt appropriates Heidegger’s insight that human beings and the world are always open to and intertwined with each other in a disclosive fashion, a closer look at Heidegger’s analysis of the *nature* of our relationship to the world (“Being-in”) helps elucidate the affective dimension of that relationship, which Arendt suggests but never explicitly theorizes. As noted above, Heidegger argues that we discover and appropriate our disclosedness via practical involvement with people and things by which we are surrounded. While our practical involvement is motivated in part by particular instrumental reasons (e.g., we use a hammer in order to hit the nail), Heidegger suggests there is a more general and fundamental factor that precedes and underlies those particular reasons. Crucially, this underlying factor is posited to be of affective nature. A set of closely related terms, “disposition (*Befindlichkeit*),”<sup>18</sup> “mood (*Stimmung*),”<sup>19</sup> and “care (*Sorge*)” illustrate this point. Arguing that Dasein cannot “know” its disclosedness because “the possibilities of disclosure which belong to cognition reach far too short a way,” Heidegger claims that we are brought to the fact of our disclosedness more basically through a mood. As he puts it, “mood is a primordial kind of Being for Dasein, in which Dasein is disclosed to itself *prior to* all cognition and volition” (BT 175).<sup>20</sup> And mood is manifested in dispositions. “In a

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<sup>18</sup> *Befindlichkeit* is translated as “a state-of-mind” by Macquarrie and Robinson in their translation of *Being and Time*. This translation is misleading as it fails to convey the bodily, pre-cognitive, and affective meaning of the term as used by Heidegger. I use the term “disposition” throughout my discussion.

<sup>19</sup> Recall that, as noted in Chapter 1, *Stimmung* is also a central concept in Kant’s account of aesthetic judgment. In this chapter, I follow Macquarrie and Robinson and translate *Stimmung* as “mood,” as it correctly highlights the affective dimension of the term.

<sup>20</sup> See also: “Moods ... are something which in advance determine our being with one another. It seems as though a mood is in each case already there, so to speak, like an atmosphere in which we first immerse ourselves in each case and which then attunes us through and through.” Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas

disposition,” Heidegger writes, Dasein “finds itself in its thrownness . . . not in the sense of coming across itself by perceiving itself, but in the sense of finding itself in the mood that it has” (BT 174). We experience the world only to the extent that we “become affected in some way (*Betroffenwerdens*),” but we can become affected only when our existence has *already* been conditioned “in such a manner that what it encounters within-the-world can “*matter*” to it” (BT 176). Mood is precisely what serves to do this preliminary conditioning by “making it possible” to “direct oneself towards something” (BT 176).

It is with reference to this affectively conditioned nature of our existence that Heidegger declares “Being-in-the-world is essentially care” (BT 237). Put differently, our existence is not something which we come or fail to know but which we affectively tune ourselves in or out (“turning towards or turning away,” BT 174). But the affectivity of our existence is ambivalent, and even dangerous, in its impact on our engagement with the world. While care makes it possible for us to interpret our disclosedness and thus to be free *for* our potentialities, sometimes (in fact, most of the time, according to Heidegger) it submerges us completely in the world and, in effect, makes us forget our disclosedness. Dispositions, as Heidegger states, “*disclose Dasein in its thrownness—proximally and for the most part—in the manner of evasive turning away*” (BT 175). Because the recognition that our existence has no foundation and requires our constant vigilance is burdensome, we are constantly tempted to “turn away” from that fact and, instead, to find easy comfort in the company of others or, in Heidegger’s terms, the “they” (*das Man*). “[T]he particular Dasein in its everydayness is *disburdened* by the “they”” (BT 165). The trouble, for Heidegger, is that the “they” has “averageness” as its “essential characteristic,” which results in the “levelling down

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Walker (Bloomington, IN: Indiana State University Press, 1995), 67. McNeill and Walker translate *Stimmung* as “attunement,” which is modified here to “mood.”

(*Einebnung*) of all possibilities of Being” (BT 164-165). Clearly invoking Christian theology, he describes the individual’s immersion in publicness (*die Öffentlichkeit*), constituted by the “they,” as the “falling (*Verfallen*).” In falling, “Dasein has ... fallen away from itself as an authentic potentiality for Being its Self, and has fallen into the ‘world’” (BT 220). Heidegger’s concern is that, as publicness increasingly dominates modern life, the “authentic” affective quality (“anxiety” in the face of our mortality)—which is supposed to bring us, if not comfortably, to encounter our own disclosedness (the “Self”) distinguished from public criteria that efface individual differences (the “they-Self”)—becomes rarefied. “Under the ascendancy of falling and publicness, ‘real’ anxiety is rare” (BT 234).

Heidegger’s insight that our involvement in the world requires primary affective attunement helps us make sense of Arendt’s otherwise enigmatic claim that our experience of reality depends on “common sense” or our “feeling for reality” as a precondition. For one thing, the meaning of the phrase from *The Human Condition* cited above (“It is by virtue of common sense that the other sense perceptions are known to disclose reality”) should now be clearer. Heidegger’s affective ontology, moreover, sheds light on Arendt’s puzzling account of the space of appearance. Arendt states that “[t]he space of appearance comes into being wherever men are together in the manner of speech and action, and therefore predates and precedes all formal constitution of the public realm and the various forms of government, that is, the various forms in which the public realm can be organized” (HC 199). But if the space of appearance is neither a physical place nor concrete institutions, what, exactly, is coming into being? In light of Arendt’s equation of the common world with common sense and her claim (extrapolated via Heidegger) that we can act in the common world only when we are affectively attuned with it, it is possible to think that, for her, what people create in acting and speaking is none other than such affective attunement, on

the basis of which they can then build various forms of political institutions. And when she says that “power,” as opposed to “strength” as the attribute of an isolated individual, “springs up between men when they act together and vanishes the moment they disperse” and “keeps the public realm” (HC 200), an important aspect of that unique concept of power may well consist in people’s *confidence* in the possibility of such a form of power and their *disposition* to create it together.

Here it is crucial to return to the point noted above: Arendt’s conception of common sense is not static à la Burke but most distinctively dynamic. Her dynamic view seems to grow out of her quarrel with Heidegger’s apolitical ontology. Even as she appropriates Heidegger’s concern with affect, Arendt overturns virtually all the other aspects of his theory. Most important, she attempts to recover publicness, which Heidegger condemns as the major obstacle to disclosive freedom, as the condition of possibility for human freedom. Some of her remarks on Heidegger clearly reveal this intention. In a 1954 speech, for instance, she said that Heidegger’s ontology, by acknowledging that the chief characteristic of human existence is “being together with others,” constitutes “a step out” of traditional political philosophy that “deal[s] with the man in the singular” and thus has not been able to conceive of politics at all.<sup>21</sup> However, she went on, “despite its obvious closeness to the political realm,” Heidegger “never reaches but always misses the center of politics—man as an acting being,” due in no small part to “the old hostility of the philosopher toward the *polis*” found in his “analyses of average everyday life in terms of *das Man*.”<sup>22</sup> In Arendt’s view, this hostility toward people in the plural even as he recognizes them as the fundamental human condition leads Heidegger to accept, paradoxically, death (i.e., the end of the individual) as the only affirmation of individuality. As Arendt put it in one

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<sup>21</sup> Hannah Arendt, “Concern with Politics in Recent European Philosophical Thought (1954),” in *Essays in Understanding*, 443.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 432-433.

the first essays she wrote after her arrival at the United States, “The essential character of the Self is ... its radical separation from its fellows. Heidegger introduced the anticipation of death ... in order to define this essential character, for it is in death that man realized the absolute *principium individuationis*. Death alone removes [the Self] from connection with those who are his fellows and who as “They” constantly prevent his being-a-Self. Though death may be the end of *Dasein*, it is at the same time the guarantor that all that matters ultimately is myself.”<sup>23</sup> It is hard not to see Arendt’s central concept of “natality”—our existence as a new beginning and our capacity to bring something new into the world—as a direct challenge to Heidegger’s notion of mortality. “[S]ince action is the political activity par excellence, natality, and not mortality, may be the central category of political, as distinguished from metaphysical, thought” (HC 9). In stark contrast to Heidegger’s insistence that confronting our mortality requires isolation and produces supposedly authentic individuality, Arendt contends that the realization of our natality is predicated on common sense (e.g., trust in our equals, confidence in the world) and (re)creates common sense. Put differently, whereas Heidegger’s mood is presumed to exist *ex nihilo*, Arendt’s common sense is generated *de novo* by people’s appearance in the presence of their peers. Unlike mood, common sense is not given as a *shared* setting but emerges from the “*sharing* of words and deeds” (HC 197, emphasis added).<sup>24</sup>

The dynamic as well as affective nature of Arendt’s common sense is exemplified in her innovative reading of Kant’s third *Critique*, especially his account of aesthetic judgment. According to Arendt, Kant’s account of judgment constitutes a

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<sup>23</sup> Hannah Arendt, “What is Existential Philosophy? (1946),” in *Essays in Understanding*, 181.

<sup>24</sup> To be fair, there are moments when Heidegger indicates that moods can be mastered. “[W]hen we master a mood, we do so by way of a counter-mood; we are never free of moods” (BT 175). At one point, he even seems to recognize the public’s potentially active role in creating moods. “Publicness ... not only has in general its own way of having a mood, but needs moods and ‘makes’ them for itself” (BT 178). But the dynamic dimension of mood remains a marginal issue in Heidegger’s thinking.



significant contribution to *political* philosophy, because it draws our attention to the fact that judging requires “the ability to see things not only from one’s own point of view but in the perspective of all those who happen to be present” (BPF 221). Here Arendt invokes Kant’s concept of “common sense (*sensus communis*),” which, as discussed in Chapter 1, he introduces in order to address the conundrum at the center of his theory of aesthetic judgment. To recall, Kant argues that aesthetic judgment requires both a subjective principle grounded in individual feeling *and* universal validity; and he brings in the concept common sense to alleviate the tension between subjective and universal dimensions of aesthetic judgment. As I have also noted, however, Kant conceptualizes common sense in highly cognitive terms, anticipating Rawls’s account of the original position. In his words, “[we] put ourselves in the position of everyone else, merely by abstracting from the limitations that [may] happen to attach to our own judging; and this in turn we accomplish by leaving out as much as possible whatever is matter, i.e., sensation, in the presentational state, and by paying attention solely to the formal features of our presentation or of our presentational state.” Even as he concedes that this formulation may seem “too artful,” Kant nonetheless maintains that “nothing is more natural than abstracting from charm and emotion when we seek a judgment that is to serve as a universal rule” (CJ 160). But the cognitive conceptualization of common sense is unsatisfactory, insofar as cognition is preceded by affect—the insight which is brought to the fore by Heidegger but admitted, if implicitly, by Kant as well.<sup>25</sup>

It is easy to conclude that Arendt simply reiterates Kant’s cognitive and individualistic account of common sense when she speaks about “the ability to see things in the perspective of all those who happen to be present” as the integral part of

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<sup>25</sup> Recall: Kant wrote that “Attunement (*Stimmung*) is the subjective condition of cognition, and without it cognition could not arise” and that “the only way this attunement can be determined is by feeling” (CJ 88). See Chapter 1 for a more detailed discussion.

judgment. Our preceding discussion, however, should prepare us for her innovative appropriation of Kant. Introducing the concept of “imagination,” which, like Kant’s common sense, serves to put us in the position of everyone else, Arendt emphasizes that imagination has the function of “having present what is absent” so that “*I now can be affected by it as though it were given to me by a nonobjective sense*” (LKPP 66-67, emphasis added). Moreover, Arendt argues that, in judging, we attempt neither to prove our propositions nor to settle the argument once and for all. As she puts it, “one can never compel anyone to agree with one’s judgments ... [O]ne can only “woo” or “court” the agreement of everyone else” (LKPP 72; see also BPF 222). Our judgment “appeals to common sense” and, in doing so, “decides how this world, independently of its utility and all our vital interests in it, is to look and sound, what we will see and what we will hear in it” (BPF 222). Since we come into this world as a new beginning, our “appeal to common sense” demands that existing common sense (how the world “looks and sounds” at the present moment) be questioned and reconfigured. Contra Habermas, Arendt’s common sense is therefore oriented not toward forging consensus but toward creating the context in which diverse perspectives become visible and audible to us—the context in which we can *feel* their presence and become *affected* by them. Put another way, not communication but *communicability* is what is at stake. As Arendt stated, “The condition *sine qua non* for the existence of beautiful objects is communicability; the judgment of the spectator creates the space without which no such objects could appear at all. The public realm is constituted by the critics and the spectators, not by the actors or the makers” (LKPP 63).<sup>26</sup> As Linda Zerilli has aptly

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<sup>26</sup> That Arendt discusses artworks in this passage should not distract us. She is quite explicit about the strong connection she draws between artworks and political acts. She argues that political activities would “come and go without leaving any trace in the world,” if it is not supported by “beauty” which is “the very manifestation of imperishability.” “The fleeting greatness of word and deed can endure in the world to the extent that beauty is bestowed upon it. Without the beauty, that is, the radiant glory in which potential immortality is made manifest in the human world, all human life would be futile and no greatness could endure” (BPF 218).

summarized, “[s]pectators ... create the space in which the objects of political judgment, the actors and actions themselves, can appear, and thus alter our sense of what belongs in the common world.”<sup>27</sup>

Against this backdrop, we can see Arendt’s concept of world alienation as referring not simply to the decline of public institutions but to the decay of common sense—people’s shared affective disposition to create and sustain the space of appearance. Indeed, when Arendt comes closest to the definition of world alienation, she says it is “the atrophy of the space of appearance and the withering of common sense.” She goes so far as to remark that a “noticeable decrease in common sense in any given community” is the “almost infallible” sign of “alienation from the world” (HC 209). This is of course neither to downplay the significance of lasting institutions in Arendt’s thought nor to suggest that institutional and affective dimensions of world alienation are mutually exclusive. But as I have sought to demonstrate, it is extremely difficult to make sense of many of her central arguments without taking into account the central, if implicit, place that affect occupies in Arendt’s theory of world alienation. Now, the remaining question is how world alienation, characterized by the affective decline, becomes such a pervasive experience not just in totalitarianism but in modern society in general. Let us take up this question in the next section.

### **The Rise of the Social: Arendt and Marx**

In the previous section, I argued that “crystallizing elements” of totalitarianism in the non-totalitarian world—the primary concern running through Arendt’s thought—can be understood as a specific kind of depoliticization characterized not simply by the institutional breakdown but by the affective decline. But if examining

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<sup>27</sup> Linda Zerilli, “‘We Feel Our Freedom’: Imagination and Judgment in the Thought of Hannah Arendt,” *Political Theory* 33(2) (2005), 179.

the *nature* of that depoliticization is one pillar of Arendt's political theory, the other pillar is understanding its *origin*. In *Origins* she examined the breakdown of the class structure and the failure of the political representative system in the Weimar republic as an exemplary origin of world alienation, the danger of which found an atrocious form in totalitarianism. But as noted, Arendt also believed that totalitarianism was only *one* of various political pathologies that could grow out of those depoliticizing tendencies and tried to understand the emergence of that depoliticization more generally. In *The Human Condition*, she seems to develop such a general understanding of a dynamic that undermines the common world *qua* common sense with her concept of "the social." But as in the case of the common world, her account of the social is often vague and puzzling. This section aims to elucidate it.

According to Arendt, the transition from the ancient to the modern world is characterized by the rise of the social ("the emergence of the social realm ... is a relatively new phenomenon whose origin coincided with the emergence of the modern age," HC 28). The ancient world, she claims, was predicated on a "decisive division between the public and private realms, between the sphere of the *polis* and the sphere of household and family, and, finally, activities related to a common world and those related to the maintenance of life" (HC 28). And it is thanks to this distinction that the ancients could understand and practice political freedom in its genuine sense. In the ancient world reconstructed by Arendt, the private realm was the household where men exercised power (in the conventional sense) and ruled over family members and slaves in mastering "the necessities of life." This unequal and "prepolitical" household, then, functioned as "the condition for freedom of the *polis*"—the public realm which was defined, in stark contrast to the private realm, by the existence of "equals" that guarantee the experience of freedom in the unique Arendtian sense of being seen and heard by peers (HC 30-31). So when Arendt blames the rise of the social for the

decline of genuine political freedom, she seems to argue that the problem is the *blurring* of the strict separation formerly maintained between the public and private realms. To this effect, at one point Arendt equates the rise of society with the “rise of “household (*oikia*)” or of economic activities to the public realm” and describes the changing relationship between the public and private realms as follows:

“housekeeping and all matters pertaining formerly to the private sphere of the family have become a “collective” concern. In the modern world, the two realms indeed constantly flow into each other like waves in the never-resting stream of the life process itself” (HC 33).

Upon this reading, one is led to conclude that Arendt categorically rejects the political relevance of economic matters. Indeed, she has often been criticized for her neglect, if not outright dismissal, of pressing socioeconomic concerns in favor of keeping the political realm “pure.” This line of criticism has solid textual ground. Arendt is insistent on the threat to the political realm posed by what she variably calls “economic matters,” “wants and needs,” or the “life process.” As she puts it in a typical statement, “the term “political economy” is a contradiction ... [W]hatever was “economic,” related to the life of the individual and the survival of the species, was a non-political, household affair by definition” (HC 29). Perhaps most notoriously, in *On Revolution* Arendt points specifically to the intrusion of economic matters into the political realm as the cause of the perceived failure of the French Revolution, lamenting the French Revolution was overwhelmed by widespread poverty that “puts men under the absolute dictate of their bodies, that is, under the absolute dictate of necessity” and, in Robespierre’s words, “missed the moment to found freedom” (OR 60-61). Here Arendt genuinely seems to place blame on “the multitude of the poor and the downtrodden” appearing in the public realm for the first time in history (OR 48). “It was under the rule of this necessity that the multitude rushed to the assistance of

the French Revolution, inspired it, drove it onward, and eventually sent it to its doom, for this was the multitude of the poor. When they appeared on the scene of politics, necessity appeared with them, and the result was that ... freedom had to be surrendered to necessity, to the urgency of the life process itself” (OR 60).

There is something odd and puzzling about Arendt’s seemingly categorical dismissal of the poor and the downtrodden. As we examined in the first section, in *Origins* she showed a keen sense that the masses (their exploitable and destructive tendencies) were a mode of political existence *historically produced* by structural changes and political failures. Consider, for example, the following passage:

“The masses’ escape from reality is a verdict against the world in which they are forced to live and in which they cannot exist, since coincidence has become its supreme master and human beings need the constant transformation of chaotic and accidental conditions into a man-made pattern of relative consistency. The revolt of the masses against “realism,” common sense, and all “the plausibilities of the world” (Burke) was the result of their atomization, of their loss of social status along with which they lost the whole sector of communal relationships in whose framework common sense makes sense. In their situation of spiritual and social homelessness, a measured insight into the interdependence of the arbitrary and the planned, the accidental and the necessary, could no longer operate. Totalitarian propaganda can outrageously insult common sense only where common sense has lost its validity” (OT 352).

Passages like this clearly suggest that Arendt by no means lacks an understanding that collectivities of people—whether it be the people, the masses, or the poor—are the *outcome* of political processes and the *symptom* of social structures. We, then, cannot but wonder: why, in such works as *The Human Condition*, *Between Past and Future*, and *On Revolution*, does Arendt seem to treat the masses more as a conceptual construct than as a historical entity? Why does she seem to be preoccupied more with excluding the general category of the masses from the public realm than with

addressing specific problems that produce the masses in the first place, perilously resembling her Cold War contemporaries?<sup>28</sup>

Insofar as Arendt's critique of the introduction of economic concerns into the public realm marks a subtle yet significant shift in focus in her thinking, we can begin to understand that shift by examining how Arendt developed a conceptual framework integral to her most sustained works on political theory (*The Human Condition*, *Between Past and Future*, and *On Revolution*) in contradistinction to Marx's ideas. Thanks to Young-Bruehl's authoritative biography, it is now well known that, after finishing *Origins*, Arendt conceived of her second project as a critique of Marxism. In an application letter she sent to the Guggenheim Foundation in 1952, Arendt proposed to fill the "most serious gap" in *Origins*, which was the "lack of an adequate historical and conceptual analysis of Bolshevism," in her new book project entitled "Totalitarian Elements in Marxism."<sup>29</sup> Although the proposed Marx book never materialized, various pieces Arendt had written for that project between 1952 and 1956 ultimately found their way into the three books mentioned above, all of which were published between 1958 and 1962. While Arendt ended up paying far less attention to Marx than she had initially intended, it is fair to say that her engagement with Marx played a formative role in the development of her thinking in this period. In particular, Arendt discovered the crucial distinction between "labor" and "work," to which she later

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<sup>28</sup> Margaret Canovan argues that Arendt distinguishes "the people" and other collectivities such as the mob and the masses and only endorses the action undertaken by the people. According to Canovan, *le peuple* in the French Revolution were, for Arendt, not the people in the genuine sense, because they did not share political institutions like their American counterparts. Margaret Canovan, "The People, the Masses, and the Mobilization of Power: The Paradox of Hannah Arendt's 'Populism'," *Social Research* 69(2) (2002): 403-422. While Canovan's exposition is useful and has the advantage of giving consistency to Arendt's arguments, it places too much emphasis on institutions and advances a conceptual distinction that is, in my judgment, too rigid and clear-cut to sustain in the real world. I suggest that Arendt's treatment of collectivities in *The Human Condition* and *On Revolution* is in important tension with the implication of her approach in *Origins*—a tension that creates moments of confusion and indeterminacy.

<sup>29</sup> Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982), 276.

added “action” to complete her famous conceptual triad in *The Human Condition*, in the early stage of her Marx project. In a letter written in January 1953, Arendt first spoke of the distinction between labor and work as “the distinction between man as *homo faber* and man as *animal laborans*.”<sup>30</sup> In the same letter, she asserted that “Marx’s dignification of labor as an essentially creative activity constitutes a decisive break with the entire Western tradition for which labor had represented the animal, not human, part of man.” She went on: “I think that unless one realizes how much the modern world, after the political revolutions of the 18<sup>th</sup> and the industrial revolution of the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, has changed the entire balance of human activities, one can hardly understand what happened with the rise of Marxism and why Marx’s teaching, nourished by the great traditions as it was, could nevertheless be used by totalitarianism.”<sup>31</sup> Considering that the changing “balance of human activities” in the modern world constitutes the core of *The Human Condition*, it is crucial to recognize Arendt’s approach to this problem was influenced, and possibly inflected, by her reading of Marx.

From the 1953 letter cited above, it is clear that Arendt viewed Marx’s theory as an *expression*, not a *critique*, of the distinctive characteristic of the modern world, namely, the social. Arendt reiterates this point time and again. In a particularly succinct phrase in *The Human Condition*, she claims that the “purely social viewpoint,” which “takes nothing into account but the life process of mankind,” receives “most coherent and greatest expression in Marx’s work” (HC 88-89). More specifically, Arendt criticizes Marx on two related grounds. First, she charges that Marx confounded activities for mere subsistence and day-to-day consumption (labor) with activities to fabricate and build the physical world that provides a sense of stability and

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 277. In the 1952 application letter, Arendt simply stated that Marx understands man as a “working animal,” without making the distinction between labor and work. Ibid., 276.

<sup>31</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, 277-278.



permanence (work). This is a very odd charge, because Arendt's distinction between labor and work is, on her admission, "unusual." "[T]here is hardly anything in either the pre-modern tradition of political thought or in the large body of modern labor theories to support it," she frankly states (HC 79-80). Her only evidence is the alleged fact that "every European language ... [has] two etymologically unrelated words" for labor and work. But at least in the case of *Arbeiten*, the word Marx used, it refers to both labor and work because, as Arendt notes, the verb form of the word "work" (*Werk*) has become "rather obsolete" (HC 80-81).<sup>32</sup> Second, and more important, Arendt argues that Marx elevated labor as the essence of human beings at the expense of action. Claiming that the "creation of man through human labor" was one of the most persistent ideas of Marx since his youth, Arendt announces, with surprisingly little evidence, that Marx "actually defined man as an *animal laborans*" (HC 86n14, 102). Behind the celebration of labor was Marx's fascination, shared with other modern thinkers such as Adam Smith, with the incredible productivity of labor (HC 87). Fixated on productivity, Arendt goes on, Marx subscribed to the characteristically modern ideal of "the unhampered pursuit of more property or of appropriation" and, worse yet, "wished to see the process of growing wealth as a natural process, automatically following its own laws and beyond willful decision and purposes" (HC 110-111). Arendt accuses Marx of envisioning a society where individuals are reduced to "the gigantic subject of the accumulation process," interpreting his concept of "species-being (*Gattungswesen*)" as a mass of individuals with a homogeneous disposition to serve the "law" of wealth-accumulation and with no freedom (HC 116). As far as *this* society is concerned, Arendt concludes, Marx was correct to predict "the withering away" of "the public realm" (HC 117).<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> See also Pitkin, *The Attack of the Blob*, 133-134.

<sup>33</sup> Arendt is aware that Marx spoke of the withering away of the state, not the public realm. Her argument is that Marx's vision of post-capitalist society is but an acceleration of the trends already

This is a shockingly simplistic and, in many respects, blatantly false reading of Marx. In all of her major charges against Marx, Arendt attributes to him ideas which he explicitly criticized. Just to take one prominent example, Arendt's central claim that Marx defines human beings as the *animal laborans* is utterly erroneous. In the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscript of 1844*, Marx distinguishes human labor specifically from animal-like labor Arendt has in mind with the concept of *animal laborans*. "[Animals] produce only when immediate physical need compels them to do so, while man produces even when he is free from physical need and truly produces only in freedom from such need ... Animals produce only according to the standards and needs of the species to which they belong, while man is capable of producing according to the standards of every species and of applying to each object its inherent standard; hence, man also produces in accordance with the laws of beauty." It is in this respect that Marx characterizes human labor as "free activity" and human beings as a "species-being."<sup>34</sup> In direct opposition to Arendt's claim, Marx does not endorse but criticizes wealth accumulation—which, for him, is the driving force of capitalism—that distorts this genuine labor/work and forces people to make all their actions (their "being [*Wesen*]" "a mere means for his *existence*."<sup>35</sup>

But if Arendt's reading of Marx is so flagrantly inaccurate, why should we dwell on it? Why can't we just bracket it and focus on Arendt's critique of the social? We can, but considering her engagement with Marx conceivably played a formative role in her thinking in this period, only at the peril of leaving her account of the social as confusing and indeterminate as it is. That is not just dissatisfying but possibly

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present in the bourgeois society. "Marx's "withering away of the state" had been preceded by a withering away of the public realm, or rather by its transformation into a very restricted sphere of government" (HC 60). Still, her argument is premised on her assertion (which, in my view, is profoundly misguided) that Marx's post-capitalist society is like a gigantic production camp where individuals mindlessly seek to accumulate wealth. Below I will discuss this point in more detail.

<sup>34</sup> Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts (1844)," in *Karl Marx: Early Writings*, trans. Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton (New York: Penguin, 1992), 328-329.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 328.

dangerous, as evidenced in Arendt's rigid rejection of the political relevance of economic matters and her dismissal of the poor. Thus in order to resist dangerous tendencies and to elucidate productive insights in Arendt's account of the social, we need to know where the confusion and indeterminacy of her discussion originates. I contend it arises from the fact that she oscillates between, on the one hand, a sophisticated critique of modern social relations and, on the other, an impatient condemnation of the category of labor. In misinterpreting Marx, it seems to me, Arendt gave momentum to the latter while missing the opportunity to develop the former even as she suggested it.

To elaborate this point, let us revisit Arendt's account of the social. As noted above, Arendt sometimes does seem to criticize the social for blurring the distinction between the public and private realms and, more specifically, making private *qua* economic matters public concerns. However, she also says something different about the pathological effect of the social, which challenges the "blurring thesis." Stating that the social is "neither private nor public" (HC 28), she argues thus: "The emergence of society ... has not only blurred the old borderline between private and political, it has also changed almost beyond recognition the meaning of the two terms and their significance of the life of the individual and the citizen" (HC 38). She also states that the modern world is characterized not by the spread of the hierarchical model of the household but by the rise of a completely new kind of rule. "[O]ne-man, monarchical rule, which the ancients stated to be the organizational device of the household, is transformed in society ... into a kind of no-man rule. ... As we know from the most social form of government, that is, from bureaucracy, ... the rule by nobody is not necessarily no-rule; it may indeed, under certain circumstances, even turn out to be one of its cruelest and most tyrannical versions" (HC 40). Moreover, unlike the private realm based on inequality among its members, the social establishes

and reinforces a certain kind of equality—equality that promotes conformism instead of natality. “[S]ociety expects from each of its members a certain kind of behavior, imposing innumerable and various rules, all of which tend to “normalize” its members, to make them behave, to exclude spontaneous action or outstanding achievement. ... [W]ith the rise of mass society, the realm of the social has finally ... reached the point where it embraces and controls all members of a given community equally and with equal strength” (HC 40-41). What is suggested in these passages is that the social does not simply change the *relationship* between the public and private realms but transforms the *nature* of both realms. Seen from this perspective, Arendt’s critique of the social can be understood not as a *conceptual* rejection of the private realm in favor of the public realm but as a *historical* critique of the specific social system that transforms both the political *and* economic realms.

In reconstructing Arendt’s account of the social as a historical critique of modern social relations, we may begin by recalling that she understands the crisis of modernity (produced by the rise of the social)—world alienation—in terms of the decline of people’s affective disposition to create and sustain the space of appearance. Instead of this public disposition, she argues, the modern world is dominated by a different disposition: “[M]odern men were not thrown back upon this world but upon themselves ... The greatness of Max Weber’s discovery about the origin of capitalism lay precisely in his demonstration that an enormous, strictly mundane activity is possible without any *care for* or *enjoyment of the world* whatever, an activity whose deepest motivation, on the contrary, is *worry and care about the self*. World alienation, and not self-alienation as Marx thought, has been the hallmark of the modern age” (HC 254, emphasis added).<sup>36</sup> Below I will examine Arendt’s invocation of capitalism

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<sup>36</sup> Here again, Arendt threatens to give the impression that she points to a specific group of people as the culprit of this lamentable situation. “The new laboring class, which literally lived from hand to mouth, stood not only directly under the compelling urgency of life’s necessity but was at the same time

and her assertion that Marx was concerned only with self-alienation. But for now, this passage offers an argument completely different from the one that insists upon, if not nostalgically romanticizes, the strict division between the public and private realms. What Arendt criticizes is not so much the public dealing of private matters as people's disposition to approach public issues solely in terms of self-interest and to treat politics exclusively as an instrument to satisfy their wants through the obtaining and exercise of sovereign power. In other words, she is concerned not about the fading of spatial demarcation but about the rise of a new subjectivity.

It is telling, in this respect, that Arendt relies on two concepts specifically denoting subjectivities in discussing the crisis of political freedom or, in her terms, *vita activa: homo faber* and *animal laborans*. Her criticism is easier to understand in the case of the *animal laborans*, because it refers to a subjectivity obsessed with the production of wealth for mere subsistence and consumption without any regard to individuality or relationship with others. What is more interesting and puzzling is her account of *homo faber*. On the one hand, Arendt recognizes the important role of *homo faber* in ensuring and sustaining political freedom. "The *vita activa* ... is always rooted in a world of men and of man-made things which it never leaves or altogether transcends ... [Y]et this environment, the world into which we are born, would not exist without the human activity which produced it, as in the case of fabricated things" (HC 22; see also 136). On the other hand, however, she argues that *homo faber* has a dangerous tendency. The work of *homo faber* is "entirely determined by the categories of means and end" (HC 143): whatever he does, he does to attain a predetermined end. As she puts it, "[t]o have a definite beginning and a definite, predictable end is the mark of fabrication," in the process of which "everything is judged in terms of

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alienated from all cares and worries which did not immediately follow from the life process itself" (HC 255). This line of argument, undeniably present in Arendt's writings, is at odds with aspects of her thought I am reconstructing.

suitability and usefulness for the desired end, and for nothing else” (HC 143-144, 153). This “utilitarian standard inherent in the very activity of fabrication” is problematic, because “the relationship between means and end on which it relies is very much like a chain whose every end can serve again as a means in some other context. In other words, in a strictly utilitarian world, all ends are bound to be of short duration and to be transformed into means for some further ends” (HC 153-154). Without the public realm in which people can establish the meaning of human activities and their products, *homo faber* “gets caught in the unending chain of means and ends without ever arriving at some principle which could justify the category of means and end, that is, utility itself” (HC 154). From here it is only a short step to the “perversion of ends and means in modern society,” the situation in which people become unable to use tools for the goals they have determined but instead subsumed under those tools to produce what (they think) they need. *Homo faber*, in other words, has a tendency to become the *animal laborans* (HC 145).

While it is tempting to see Arendt as arguing that this degeneration *necessarily* happens, such an interpretation is difficult to sustain since, as noted, she assigns *homo faber* a crucial role of building a stable world that people need in order to lead a *vita activa*. This does not make much sense if *homo faber* is doomed to become the *animal laborans* and completely unreliable. Thus the key question is under what historical conditions *homo faber* degenerates into the *animal laborans* and, more specifically, how the social effects that degeneration. Arendt herself notes the historical specificity of the transition from *homo faber* to the *animal laborans*: “*homo faber*, the toolmaker, invented tools and implements in order to erect a world, not—at least, not primarily—to help the human life process. The question is therefore not so much whether we are the masters or the slaves of our machines, but whether machines still serve the world and its things, or if, on the contrary, they and the automatic motion of their processes

*have begun* to rule and even destroy world and things” (HC 151; emphasis added).

Also: “The ideals of *homo faber*, the fabricator of the world, which are permanence, stability, and durability, *have been* sacrificed to abundance, the ideal of the *animal laborans*” (HC 126; emphasis added).

But even as she suggests it, Arendt never fully explores how the social forges a linkage between *homo faber* and the *animal laborans*. Instead, she tends to take her discussion in a purely theoretical and transhistorical direction, possibly because she views Marx’s thought as the expression of the ideal of the *animal laborans* and tries to expose proto-totalitarian elements within (her version of) Marx’s theory. This tendency, I think, is what sometimes leads her to focus more on condemning the *theoretical category* of labor or of collectivities such as the poor and the laborers rather than investigating the *historical mechanism* through which labor becomes a dominant form of human activity with a detrimental impact on political subjectivities. Resisting this tendency, I want to reconstruct a different, more historically attentive, perspective, which is also present in Arendt’s account of the social. This aspect of her thought, I suggest, can be fleshed out and articulated when we read her critique of the social alongside, not against as she did, Marx’s ideas.

Recall that, in the passage cited above, Arendt points specifically to capitalism (siding with Weber and distinguishing herself from Marx) while discussing world alienation in terms of the decline of “care for the world” and the rise of “care about the self.” Indeed, she makes numerous remarks throughout *The Human Condition* to the effect that capitalism is responsible for the degeneration of *homo faber* into the *animal laborans*. As noted, the triumph of the *animal laborans* as the dominant subjectivity means that people’s disposition comes to be defined by two related characteristics: first, they are disposed to approach their life almost exclusively in terms of the “necessities of life.” And second, since all they care about is securing perceived “basic”

goods for their subsistence, they are obsessed with producing more without regard to the purpose and meaning of production. In a highly suggestive discussion, Arendt traces these changes to the transformation of the nature of private property. Lamenting that the moderns mistakenly tend to equate property and wealth, which are “of an entirely different nature” (HC 61), she claims that “[p]rior to the modern age ... [private] property meant no more or less than to have one’s location in a particular part of the world and therefore to belong to the body politic” (HC 61; see also 70, 72, 29-30). In this respect, “[t]he wealth of a foreigner or a slave was under no circumstances a substitute for this property” (HC 62). This understanding of property, however, is lost to the modern age. Instead of ensuring public life, property came to penetrate, overtake, and ultimately redefine the public realm, but—and this is crucial—only *after it was completely transformed*. Private property, once the condition for political freedom, became “wealth” that serves no external purposes (i.e., public life) but itself or, more precisely, its own expansion. The notion of endless accumulation is so foreign to the ancients, Arendt writes, that “[i]f the property-owner chose to enlarge his property instead of using it up in leading a political life, it was as though he willingly sacrificed his freedom and became voluntarily what the slave was against his own will, a servant of necessity” (HC 65).

According to Arendt, the transformation of property into wealth was initiated by “expropriation,” namely, by depriving certain groups of the population (e.g., peasant classes) of their property, a stable place of their own in the world. In this sense, she writes, “expropriation and world alienation coincide” (HC 253). And once it became synonymous with private property, wealth came to constitute the basis of permanence that used to be provided only by the common world—permanence, however, of an entirely different kind. “Only when wealth became capital, whose chief function was to generate more capital, did private property equal or come close to the



permanence inherent in the commonly shared world. However, this permanence is of different nature; it is the permanence of a process rather than the permanence of a stable structure. Without the process of accumulation, wealth would at once fall back into the opposite process of disintegration through use and consumption” (HC 68-69). At this point, Arendt seems to imply that the rise of the *animal laborans* and the destruction of the common world—which, as I have argued, converge in terms of people’s dispositional turning away from public concerns toward private interest—are caused by a system in which wealth accumulation does not end with “the satisfaction of wants and desires” and “spread[s] throughout the society and initiate[s] a steadily increasing flow of wealth” (HC 255). She seems to imply, if without realizing or intending it, that the shift in subjectivity and disposition is not a private matter but is a social problem deeply embedded in structural conditions.

Though Arendt never explicitly acknowledges (as she rarely does with regard to sources of her ideas), it seems indisputable that her brief discussion of the rise of wealth or capital as the dominant form of property in the modern age is indebted to Marx’s analysis of capitalism. More curious, and of more relevance to our discussion, is Arendt’s claim that her diagnosis of this process is fundamentally different from Marx’s: world alienation as opposed to self-alienation. In my view, Arendt *misinterpreted* the focus of Marx’s theory as self-alienation and, in doing so, missed the opportunity to develop her own account of world alienation and, in particular, exactly how the unending process of capital accumulation effects the degeneration of “care for the world” into “care about the self.”

Arendt seems to touch upon the mediating mechanism that links wealth accumulation and world alienation in her brief account of the “exchange market.” In the ancient world, she argues, the exchange market was the “hallmark” of “non-political communities,” where *homo faber* (i.e., craftsmen) emerges from their

isolation to meet other citizens and to show and exchange their products (HC 160). Existing as marginal, if permanent, part of the polity, the exchange market of the ancient world did not compromise *homo faber*'s commitment to the shared world. In the modern world, however, the exchange market became the very center of society, forcing everyone to produce exclusively for the market and, consequently, in accordance with "exchange value" rather than the "intrinsic worth" of things (HC 163-164). Now, the ascendance of exchange value—as opposed to, say, craftsmanship or public esteem—as the regulating principle of social relations creates trouble. Since exchange value "exists only in relation to other things" and lacks "an "objective" value independent of the ever-changing estimations of supply and demand," it disrupts, as it were, the ontological basis of *homo faber*. As Arendt writes, in a society dominated by exchange value *homo faber*, "whose activity is determined by the constant use of yardsticks, measurements, rules, and standards," suffers "the loss of "absolute" standards or yardsticks" (HC 166). But this is just a glimpse of insight; Arendt never explains how, exactly, exchange value makes *homo faber* vulnerable to the ideal of the *animal laborans*. Instead, she once again obscures her own insight by describing the transition from *homo faber* to the *animal laborans* as if it is a logical necessity. "[The loss of universal standards under the reign of exchange value] shows how closely the relativity of the exchange market is connected with the instrumentality arising out of the world of the craftsman and the experience of fabrication. The former, indeed, develops without break and consistently from the latter" (HC 166).

A critique of exchange value, of course, is at the center of Marx's analysis of capitalism, and Arendt is aware of that. But she rejects his critique of exchange value because she thinks it lands us, as noted, in affirmation of the ideal of the *animal laborans*. In the stead of exchange value, Arendt asserts, Marx "put the function things have in the consuming life process of men which knows neither objective and intrinsic

worth nor subjective and socially determined value. In the socialist equal distribution of all goods to all who labor, every tangible thing dissolves into a mere function in the regeneration process of life and labor power” (HC 165). Above I have briefly noted that this is a serious misreading of Marx. Here we need to clarify Marx’s theory in a little more detail because, liberated from Arendt’s misinterpretation, it actually provides crucial insights for elucidating the problem she left underdeveloped—the social mechanism by which the *animal laborans* becomes the dominant subjectivity attuned exclusively with self-interest.

Contra Arendt, I argue that Marx’s theory is not the expression but a critique of the *general social relations* created by capitalism and their damaging impact on subjectivity. By saying that the focus of Marx’s critique of capitalism is “general social relations,” I am suggesting that his analysis goes far beyond exposing economic exploitation. Marx’s intention is already clear in the passage from the 1848 *Manuscripts* cited above. There he criticizes capitalism not simply for taking material products away from workers but for suppressing the ability as well as disposition of “man (*Mensch*)”—not just workers—to reflect upon and determine the goals of their own life and to pursue those goals by creating an “*objective world*” or fashioning “inorganic nature.” Here it is important to note that the “creation of an objective world,” which, for Marx, constitutes the core of human freedom, is not simply a crude manipulation of nature. Rather, it refers to people’s effort to construct a context in which they form objectives of their shared life. As Marx states, “[i]t is ... in his fashioning of the objective [cf. objects] that man really proves himself to be a *species-being*.”<sup>37</sup> And as opposed to Arendt’s claim, Marx never treats this essential, goal-determining, aspect of human freedom as a matter of the self; he is quite emphatic about the social or solidary nature of labor as free activity. Writing that “[c]ommunism

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<sup>37</sup> Marx, “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts,” 328-329, bracketed insertion is mine.

is ... not a *state of affairs* which is to be established, an *ideal* to which reality [will] have to adjust itself ... [but] the *real* movement which abolishes the present state of things,” Marx highlights that this movement “is not possible without the community.”<sup>38</sup> He goes on: “Only in community [with others has each] individual the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions; only in the community, therefore, is personal freedom possible. ... In the real community the individuals obtain their freedom in and through their association [with others].”<sup>39</sup> Seen in this light, Marx’s concept of labor does not uncritically succumb to the ideal of productivity and abundance as Arendt suggests. It pursues, instead, what he calls the “*objectification of the species-life of man*,” which can be understood as the collective attempt at affirming and realizing our subjectivity that is able and disposed to determine the purpose of our activities.<sup>40</sup>

Marx argues that this goal-determining subjectivity takes an estranged or alienated form in capitalism, and his discussion of alienated subjectivity has important resonances with Arendt’s account of world alienation. Suggestively, Marx acknowledges, if not fully develops, the affective or dispositional dimension of alienation. While discussing the detrimental effect of private property (which, as the outcome of alienated labor, serves capital accumulation and is similar to Arendt’s notion of wealth), he deplores that, as people are incorporated into the process of capital accumulation, “*all* the physical and intellectual senses have been replaced by the simple estrangement of *all* these senses—the sense of *having*. The human being had to be reduced to this absolute poverty in order that he might yield his inner wealth to the outer world.”<sup>41</sup> Similarly, Marx characterizes the supersession (*Aufhebung*) of

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<sup>38</sup> Karl Marx, “The German Ideology (1846),” in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert Tucker (New York: Norton, 1978), 162, 197.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 197. The bracketed insertion is Tucker’s.

<sup>40</sup> Marx, “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts,” 329.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 352. I used Tucker’s translation in the second sentence.

private property as “the complete *emancipation* of all human senses and attributes.” By the term “human senses,” he does not refer to private feeling or sensitivity or, as he puts it, “a musical ear, an eye for the beauty of form, in short, *senses* capable of human gratification.” Rather, he has in mind a far more fundamental affective state, which, like Arendt’s “common sense,” constitutes the foundation of other particular senses. The “human sense” is Marx’s term and it enables members of the community to experience (become affected by) the world beyond the terms of private ownership.<sup>42</sup> Thus, the post-capitalist society he envisions does not mark the final victory of the *animal laborans* but the inauguration of a history that is open to people with the human sense. “[T]he society that is *fully developed* produces man in all the richness of his being, the rich man who is *profoundly and abundantly endowed with all the senses*, as its constant reality.”<sup>43</sup> In other words, post-capitalist society is structured in such a way that subjectivities bearing the human sense flourish and that people determine, through their collective endeavor, the common good freed from the imperative of capital accumulation.

His vision of post-capitalist society notwithstanding, Marx’s primary concern is to show how the alienation of the human sense is *structurally generated* by capitalism. While he does have some preliminary insights into this structural dynamic in his early works, Marx develops a more systematic account of this problem in his later works. And at the center of his discussion is the concept of exchange value, which, as we have seen, Arendt too points out—and yet fails to analyze in detail—as a crucial social mechanism that produces world alienation. According to Marx, capitalist society is distinguished from various non-capitalist societies by the fact that exchange becomes the dominant form of human action (cf. HC 162), thereby making social

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 353.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 354.

relations abstract and homogeneous. In societies where social interaction is based on direct personal ties, social relations take various forms with different meanings and values attached to them (e.g., family ties, friendship, sense of duty, loyalty, patriotism, etc.<sup>44</sup>). In contrast, in capitalist society social relations are divested of these various meanings and regulated exclusively by exchange value—regulated, in other words, as commodities. As Marx put it in the *Grundrisse* (1857-58), people’s “reciprocal dependence” in capitalist society is “expressed in the constant need for exchange, and in exchange value as the all-sided mediation.”<sup>45</sup>

The trouble is not simply that the system of exchange value is premised on economic exploitation (Marx argues that surplus value, which is essential to increasing the exchange values of commodities and accumulating capital, stems from workers’ extra time of labor appropriated by the capitalist class). More fundamentally, the problem is that exchange value has a systematic tendency to become the universal term of social relations, because turning *everything*—natural environment, human artifacts, activities, ideas, and even relations—into “property” that can be privately owned and sold is the precondition for capital accumulation. And this universalization of exchange value, or the commodification of social relations, undermines people’s ability and disposition to critically reflect upon the consequences of the regime of capital accumulation, importantly including economic exploitation, as socially produced and thus reversible problems. This political acquiescence is created as commodified social relations alienate people from each other or, more precisely, from the human sense that they could “freely” determine the objective and meaning of their

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<sup>44</sup> Needless to say, this does not mean that pre-modern social relations were all desirable. The pre-modern world was full of unjustifiably hierarchical or explicitly violent relations of domination. As Marx recognizes, the bourgeois revolution played an emancipatory role in dissolving these relations of domination.

<sup>45</sup> Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (New York: Penguin, 1993), 156.

activities through “association with others.” Alienation from the human sense occurs, first of all, through social fragmentation. In capitalist society, social interdependence remains just as strong and even deepens and yet it becomes difficult to recognize and consciously appropriate it. Few things are produced in isolation in modern society, but people “sell” their labor in exchange for wages separated from each other as well as from the production process as a whole. Likewise, people produce things not for their own use but for the market, namely, to exchange their products for money in order to purchase the goods produced by the process in which they are not involved.<sup>46</sup> As both producers and consumers, people are conditioned to become oblivious and indifferent to each other’s presence as co-participants of the production as well as the distribution process. This fragmenting effect is at once obscured and accelerated due to the fact that exchange value is externalized in seemingly neutral objects such as commodities and money. Due to the money form, exchange value assumes an “objective” status and naturalizes the notion of “private interest,” which is in fact a “socially determined interest” that “can be achieved only within the conditions laid down by society and with the means provided by society.”<sup>47</sup> Moreover, as value is abstracted from the purpose of production and money functions as the universal means for all “necessities of life,” the maximum acquisition of money becomes the single purpose of human activities, putting people in a competitive, if not antagonistic, relationship with each other. Marx describes this situation in the following passage, which is worth quoting at length:

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<sup>46</sup> The universalization of the commodity form and the consequent fragmentation of social relations are discussed in Georg Lukács’s classic essay, “Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat,” in *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971), 83-222. While I am inspired by Lukács’s analysis, I do not share his perspective that posits the proletariat as the Hegelian Subject that makes history by realizing itself. I will discuss this point shortly.

<sup>47</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*, 156.

“The reciprocal and all-sided dependence of individuals who are indifferent to one another forms their social connection [in capitalist society]. This social bond is expressed in *exchange value*, by means of which alone each individual’s own activity or his product becomes an activity and a product for him; he must produce a general product—*exchange value*, or ... *money*. On the other side, the power which each individual exercises over the activity of others or over social wealth exists in him as the owner of *exchange values*, of *money*. The individual carries his social power, as well as his bond with society, in his pocket. Activity, regardless of its individual manifestation, and the product of activity, regardless of its particular make-up, are always *exchange value*, and exchange value is a generality, in which all individuality and peculiarity are negated and extinguished. ... The social character of activity ... appear[s] as something alien and objective, confronting the individuals, not as their relation to one another, but as their subordination to relations which subsist independently of them and which arise out of collisions between mutually indifferent individuals.”<sup>48</sup>

Here Marx clearly indicates the true pathology of the universalization of exchange value lies in its broad impact on social relations and subjectivity. Exchange value displaces “social bond” into “collisions” between “mutually indifferent individuals.” All members of society—both workers and capitalists—are subordinated to this antagonistic mode of social relations and subjectivity and, to that extent, their freedom is severely circumscribed. They can determine only *how* they can maximize surplus value but not *whether* they ought to do so; they are completely subsumed under the imperative of capital accumulation. As Marx states in *Capital* (1867), “[i]f ... the proletarian is merely a machine for the production of surplus-value, the capitalist too is merely a machine for the transformation of this surplus-value into surplus capital.” It is in this respect that he speaks of “[a]ccumulation for the sake of accumulation, production for the sake of production” as the essence of capitalism.<sup>49</sup> Seen in this light, both the danger and resilience of capitalism cannot be explained simply by the

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 156-157.

<sup>49</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Penguin, 1990), 742.



disproportionate power of the capitalist class. Rather, it can be found in the fact that commodified social relations deprive human activity of its goal-determining “freedom” and reduce it to a means for the predetermined end of capital accumulation. The universalization of exchange value does not merely conceal or facilitate class domination; it *is* a new kind of rule.<sup>50</sup> This instrumentalization, not economic exploitation alone, arguably constitutes the crux of Marx’s most penetrating critique of capitalism.

Marx’s analysis of capitalism, then, can be seen as a systematic elaboration of his own claim in *The German Ideology* (1846) that the community in a capitalist society is not only “illusory” but a “new fetter” to real association of people. The working of capitalism structures a society in such a way that people belong to a community only as members of a class, namely, only to suppress and dominate other classes exclusively with a view to increasing their share of social wealth and without questioning the purpose of, or conditions for, the accumulation of wealth. In other words, under capitalism instrumentalized social relations replicate themselves in the realm of politics. Up till now, Marx argues, “the conditions of the free development and movement of individuals” were “abandoned to chance and had won an independent existence over against the separate individuals just because of their separation as individuals.” The “combination of people,” which is supposed to deal with those conditions, has merely been an “agreement upon these conditions, within which the individuals were free to enjoy the freaks of fortune.” “This right to the undisturbed enjoyment, *within certain conditions*, of fortuity and chance has up till now been called personal freedom.”<sup>51</sup> Seen in this light, the class division (in which

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<sup>50</sup> For an extended discussion of this aspect of Marx’s theory, see Moishe Postone, *Time, Labor, and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx’s Critical Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

<sup>51</sup> Marx, “The German Ideology,” 197-198, emphasis added.

the proletariat class is clearly at a disadvantage) is not the *essence* but a *symptom* of capitalist social relations, just as egotism and mutual indifference are. Thus, what Marx envisions is not the *reversal* of class relations (i.e., domination by the proletariat class) but the *abolition* of the class as such through the overcoming of instrumentalized social and political relations.<sup>52</sup>

Thus understood, Marx's theory helps elucidate the crucial gap in Arendt's account of the social: why does *homo faber* no longer serve the *vita activa* and degenerate into the *animal laborans* in the modern world? The Weberian viewpoint that highlights the rise of secularism and bureaucracy—which Arendt sometimes adopts—cannot provide a fully satisfactory answer to this vital question. Secularism might show how people's belief in the permanence of the world (to come) declines, but it falls short of explaining what actively motivates them in place of that belief. The theory of bureaucracy might portray the instrumentalization of politics but it fails to explicate precisely how broader social relations and subjectivities are also instrumentalized in relation to the imperative of wealth accumulation. In light of Marx's theory, we can see how capital accumulation and the universalization of exchange value—historically specific dynamics that Arendt points to but never analyzes in depth or connects—operate, in a mutually reinforcing fashion, to produce a specific form of social relations that *structurally conditions* people to care exclusively about their private interest at the expense of their relations with others. If, as I have argued, this socially disconnected disposition is precisely what Arendt tries to warn us about with her concept of world alienation, the *double-sided structural dynamic* of

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<sup>52</sup> As noted, here I depart from Lukács's position. Lukács argues that capitalist social relations can be overcome only when the proletariat becomes conscious of its status as a commodity (object) and forms itself into a class (subject). By acquiring such a conscious, Lukács claims, the proletariat becomes the "identical subject-object of history whose praxis will change reality." Lukács, "Reification," 197, 168-172. But if, as I have suggested, the class division is one (surely major) symptom of capitalist social relations, the site of transformation does not have to be located exclusively in the proletariat class.

capitalism illustrates the origin of that disposition—the origin that Arendt traced, vaguely and enigmatically, in her account of the social.

## **Conclusion**

As postwar democracy was instrumentalized in opposition to totalitarianism and in correlation with capitalism, Arendt was deeply concerned that instrumental democracy (still in formation) would exacerbate, rather than redress, dangerous tendencies of modernity toward world alienation—tendencies which manifested themselves most horrifically in totalitarianism but by no means disappeared with the demise of Nazism and Stalinism. I have suggested that a fuller understanding of her political theory is possible when we pay more sustained attention to her insightful yet underdeveloped critique of instrumental democracy and its consequences. Her concepts of world alienation and the social contain the gist of this critique, and I have sought to reinterpret those concepts by reading Arendt's sometimes enigmatic claims in light of the insights of Heidegger and Marx. By considering Heidegger's claim that our existence is premised on primary affective attunement, we can understand in what sense Arendt's concept of world alienation denotes not simply the dissolution of institutions but the decline of people's disposition to create and preserve shared contexts which are, for her, the condition of possibility for the realization of political freedom. Arendt traces the origin of this dispositional or affective decay in her account of the social. She argues that, with the rise of the social, care about the self takes over care for the world, as the public sphere is subordinated to the predetermined goal of wealth accumulation and collective subjectivities are dissolved into isolated individuals merely serving that goal. But she fails to analyze how wealth accumulation becomes such a formidable social ideal, how collective subjectivities are fragmented in the regime of wealth accumulation, and how both processes facilitate the

ascendancy of self-care as the dominant disposition. This failure can be attributed, I have contended, partly to the fact that she rejects Marx's theory too readily as a representation of the ideal of the social. Contrary to Arendt's assertion, Marx's critique of capitalism actually elucidates Arendt's account of the social by showing how capital accumulation and the universalization of exchange value—two essential dynamics of capitalism—produce a specific form of social relations that structurally turn people's disposition away from the cultivation of their collective power to the endless and purposeless expansion of their private interest.

Arendt lamented the experience of political freedom had become so rare in the modern world. One of those rare events, which she said gave her "joy," was the 1956 Hungarian Revolution.<sup>53</sup> While Arendt's well-known enthusiasm about the Hungarian Revolution is often recognized as an inspiration for her valorization of the council system, her other suggestive observations on this momentous event have received less attention. For one thing, she singles out the Hungarian Revolution as the only modern revolution that successfully avoided being overwhelmed by the social question (OR 112). By this she does not mean that economic issues were simply disregarded; what makes the Hungarian revolution truly inspiring, she implies, is the fact that revolutionaries did not succumb to trade unionism seeking an "increase in their economic security, social prestige, and political power" over and against other classes and, instead, combined their economic demands with "their own ideas about the possibilities of democratic government under modern conditions" (HC 216). This suggests, in line with the interpretation I advanced above, that if Arendt's theory authorizes a criticism of certain political movements, it is not simply because those movements are centered on economic issues or waged by "economic agents" such as the poor or the workers but because they reproduce the terms of the social. Moreover,

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<sup>53</sup> Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt*, 298.

she discusses the legacy of the Hungarian Revolution specifically, if somewhat ambiguously, in affective terms. “If the tragedy of the Hungarian revolution achieved nothing more than that it showed the world that, all defeats and all appearances notwithstanding, this political *élan* has not yet died, its sacrifices were not in vain” (HC 217). This might as well be Arendt’s elegiac tribute to the tragically short-lived revolution. But to the extent that my analysis of the affective dimension of world alienation holds validity, her remarks might also contain a more substantial argument. Rekindling political *élan*—invoking people to actually feel that political freedom is possible and meaningful—is indeed important because, in our world, such a mood is structurally conditioned to fade.

Arendt died in 1975, right before the Third Wave of democratization began to emerge. Had she lived to see its unfolding, she would have been thrilled to witness the eruption of democratic aspirations and the holistic vision of democratization that combines political and economic demands. As we know, however, instrumental democracy would soon divert and overwhelm the creative energy of the Third Wave. That she would have found deeply troubling.

## CONCLUSION

In recent years, renewed and vigorous demands for democracy seem to be on the rise. A wave of popular demonstrations for democracy swept the Arab world—which came to be called the “Arab Spring”—where the prospect of democratization appeared remote just a few years ago. At the same time, those in established democracies, both old and new, expressed their frustration and anger at the present working of democracy. In the United States, the Occupy Wall Street movement broke out, bringing to light—with its powerful slogan “We are the 99%”—the ironic situation in which a democracy is increasingly swayed by a small fraction of the population without regard to the concerns of the majority. Just a few months before the beginning of the Occupy Wall Street Movement, an extraordinary number of people in Spain staged similar protests, demanding “Real Democracy NOW! (*¡Democracia Real YA!*).” While deeply troubling economic problems such as rising unemployment, growing inequality, and deepening poverty sparked these movements, protesters also seem to advance a critique of democratic institutions and practices currently in place. Instead of channeling their demands through conventional political institutions, participants in the Occupy Wall Street and the Real Democracy NOW movements experimented with more direct forms of democracy. Even in Chile and South Korea, large-scale protests recently erupted after a long period of relative political quietude. These movements, which, despite their differences, share strong aspirations for a different kind of democracy, may be signaling that democratic disaffection—the systemic effect of instrumental democracy—can no longer be contained within the system of instrumental democracy and starts becoming a disrupting force.

Our interrogation into postwar democracy, however, cautions us that people's democratic aspirations, no matter how strong, are vulnerable to forces of instrumental democracy. One is compelled to think about this vulnerability, for example, observing the precarious political development of Egypt, the most populous country that experienced the Arab Spring. There, the presidential election following the exuberant toppling of Hosni Mubarak's dictatorship produced two runoff candidates—Ahmed Shafiq, a former air-force general who served as Mubarak's last prime minister and Mohammed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood—who are deemed by many Egyptians to be contrary to their vision of democracy. Speaking volumes of their disillusionment, out of the 23 million voters who cast ballots in the first round of elections, 12 million did not vote for either of the runoff candidates.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the military, which had controlled the country behind the scenes since 1952 (its private-sector investments are estimated to account for one-third of the country's GDP), maintains overwhelming power over such democratic institutions as Congress and the President. The Supreme Constitutional Court dissolved the popularly elected Parliament just two days before the presidential run-off,<sup>2</sup> in order to support the military's plan to not "relinquish authority before supervising a new Constitution."<sup>3</sup> And even before the election committee announced Mohammed Morsi as victor, the military decreed a severe constriction of the powers of the presidency. The new president, as *Time* magazine reports, "will have no real control over the budget and no decisive role in foreign policy, defense or national-security matters. He won't even have the symbolic status of

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<sup>1</sup> Abdel-Rahman Hussein, "Egypt's Presidential Election Turns Toxic amid Anger over 'Stolen Revolution'," *Guardian*, June 16, 2012. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jun/16/egypt-presidential-election-stolen-revolution>.

<sup>2</sup> David D. Kirkpatrick, "Blow to Transition as Court Dissolves Egypt's Parliament," *New York Times*, June 14, 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/15/world/middleeast/new-political-showdown-in-egypt-as-court-invalidates-parliament.html?pagewanted=all>.

<sup>3</sup> David D. Kirkpatrick, "Judge Helped Egypt's Military to Cement Power," *New York Times*, July 3, 2012. [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/04/world/middleeast/judge-helped-egypts-military-to-cement-power.html?pagewanted=1&\\_r=1&hp](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/04/world/middleeast/judge-helped-egypts-military-to-cement-power.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1&hp).

commander in chief of the armed forces. By fiat, the junta has kept all those functions for itself.”<sup>4</sup> The situation is hardly better in democracies. The Occupy Wall Street movement is quietly fading, if retaining its profound symbolic force, with little noticeable change. In Spain, Chile, and South Korea, even after waves of demonstrations criticized their policies, conservative parties still won elections.

To be sure, it remains to be seen whether tendencies of Egypt’s inchoate democracy toward instrumentalization will deepen or be reversed with time or to what extent such instrumentalizing tendencies are driven by, or even consonant with, forces of instrumental democracy identified in previous chapters. Nonetheless, there seem to be some signs that global forces of instrumental democracy—especially neoliberalism which we examined in Chapter 4—are at work, likely deepening democratic disaffection that has already begun to form.

One of the principal underlying causes of the Arab Spring is arguably disastrous consequences of neoliberalism that has been aggressively implemented over the past three decades in the Arab world. The deregulation of capital flow created a weak and highly volatile economy characterized by low public investment and high dependence on short-term private capital. This skewed economic structure left Arab countries deindustrialized, disproportionately reliant on the export of oil, and few jobs (the region has experienced the highest unemployment rate in the world for more than three decades).<sup>5</sup> Thus, when oil prices fall as they often do, throwing the economy into recession, social consequences are exceedingly dire because those left outside the system, which account for up to half of the labor force, has virtually no social safety net.

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<sup>4</sup> Jay Newton-Small and Abigail Hauslohner, “How the Military Won the Egyptian Election,” *Time*, July 9, 2012. 30-34, 30.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Council, “Summary of the Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia Region, 2007-2008,” esp. 2, 9-10, 12. <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=E/2008/20>.



In Egypt, the neoliberal restructuring of the economy got underway since Mubarak signed structural adjustment agreements with the IMF and the World Bank in 1991 and adopted a number of radical measures under the direction of USAID. The blind adoption of the neoliberal regimen devastated the lives of many Egyptians and created a highly unequal class structure. For example, the Mubarak regime, pressured by USAID, undertook a “commercialization” of agriculture which shifted the policy focus away from the local production of staple foods (e.g., wheat) to the large-scale, mechanical production of export crops (e.g., cotton). The concentrated mode of agricultural production proved to be a boon for a small class of wealthy landlords, whereas reduced subsidies pushed many local farmers to bankruptcy. Unmoved by these consequences, USAID representatives insisted that the displaced rural population would flock to cities and “help keep real urban wages low and industry more profitable.”<sup>6</sup> But this optimistic projection, based less on substantial evidence than on abstract economic models, was contradicted by another set of neoliberal policies that undercut the very industries supposed to absorb excess labor. Under the slogan of “privatization,” the Mubarak regime sold state-owned industries to a small group of oligarchs (including, as noted, high-ranking military officers) which, in turn, led to a massive layoff. The workforce of the Egyptian textile industry, for example, was slashed from half a million to a quarter-million.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, the commercialization of agriculture destabilized and degraded the life of most Egyptians, including shrinking groups of workers. The price of basic food items soared due to almost eviscerated local production and the rising costs of imported foods. Since wages were not fully indexed to the inflation rate, workers were forced to endure more

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<sup>6</sup> Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, and Modernity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 266-267.

<sup>7</sup> Austin Mackell, “The IMF versus the Arab Spring,” *Guardian*, May 25, 2011.  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/may/25/imf-arab-spring-loans-egypt-tunisia>.

hours and inhuman working conditions in desperate attempt to compensate for the widening gap between their wages and the cost of living. Under these circumstances, a wave of strikes began to break out in the mid-2000s, notably among textile workers of Mahalla—a remarkable event which is considered by many Egyptian activists a crucial step towards the eventual toppling of the Mubarak regime.<sup>8</sup>

Seen in this light, it is ironic that one of the first international responses to the Arab Spring was an offer from G8 leaders, the World Bank, and the IMF which promises billions of dollars in aid and credits. Behind this generous offer, of course, is the pressure that Egypt does not stray from the neoliberal economic structure that has been profitable for foreign investors. As Mike Froman, a deputy national security adviser at the White House, said, the offer is “not a blank cheque. ... It’s an envelope that could be achieved in the context of suitable reform efforts. ... This is largely a case of trade not aid, investment not assistance over time. It’s really about establishing the conditions under which the private sectors in these economies can flourish and the benefits of growth are broadly shared.”<sup>9</sup> The bizarre scene in which foreign technocrats attempt to dictate one of the most significant aspects of Egypt’s transition to democracy well before Egyptians form their democratic institutions tells a great deal about the current state of democracy.

The recalcitrant presence and working of forces of instrumental democracy makes us question the validity of prominent theories of democracy today. For example, one of the most influential recent accounts of democracy is the theory of social capital, popularized most notably by Harvard political scientist Robert D. Putnam.<sup>10</sup> Defining

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> John Irish and Luke Baker, “G8 pledges \$20 Billion to foster Arab Spring,” *Reuters*, May 27, 2011. <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2011/05/27/us-g-idUKTRE74P00320110527/>.

<sup>10</sup> While Putnam is largely responsible for the huge attention to social capital in the study of democracy, the concept social capital is not his invention. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu is often considered to have first used the concept in its contemporary sense, and American sociologist James Coleman was instrumental in initiating its social scientific application. For a useful review of social capital research, see Michael Woolcock, “Social Capital and Economic Development: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis

social capital as “features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions,”<sup>11</sup>

Putnam argues that the health of democracy relies not only on public institutions but on “widespread participation in *private* voluntary groups—those networks of civic engagement that embody social capital.”<sup>12</sup> In his famed book, *Bowling Alone* (2000),

Putnam links the decline in political participation and trust—part of the problem I have traced—to the erosion of social capital, and calls for the proliferation of voluntary groups in all walks of life as a crucial way to revitalize democracy.

“Voluntary groups are not a panacea for what ails our democracy,” Putnam writes.

“But without social capital we are more likely to have politics of a certain type” driven more by polarizing ideological extremism than by measured deliberation.<sup>13</sup>

The core insight of Putnam’s social capital theory is an essential one. As I have sought to show, and as astute theorists of democracy including Rousseau, Montesquieu, and Tocqueville have pointed out, democracy cannot work by political institutions alone; it is to be grounded in robust social relations and political subjectivities concerned about, and disposed to, public matters. But Putnam’s conceptualization of social capital—especially his focus on private, voluntary associations *to the exclusion* of democratic norms, public organizations, and political activities—radically reduces and regiments the realm of social relations and political subjectivities. In emphasizing civic skills and interpersonal trust cultivated by *private*

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and Policy Framework,” *Theory and Society* 27(2) (1998): 151-208. Gaining enormous currency in a remarkably short period of time, social capital has become one of the most prominent concepts in many fields of study. Woolcock groups the vast literature on social capital into seven substantive fields: families and youth behavior problem, schooling and education, community life, work and organizations, democracy and governance, general cases of collective action problem, and intangible assets. *Ibid.*, 155n20.

<sup>11</sup> Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 167.

<sup>12</sup> Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 336.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 341-342.

associations, Putnam never explains how those qualities translate into *public* dispositions and capabilities oriented to democratic politics.<sup>14</sup> As Jean L. Cohen incisively points out, “it is entirely possible that without other mechanisms for the generalization of trust, participation in associations and membership in social networks could foster particularism, localism, intolerance, exclusion, and generalized mistrust of outsiders, of the law, and of government. Without other mediations, there is no reason to expect that the forms of reciprocity or trust generated within small groups would extend beyond the group or, for that matter, that group demands would be anything other than particularistic.”<sup>15</sup> Moreover, as we will see momentarily, this curious reduction of civil society is combined with a twisted appropriation of Putnam’s above suggestion—which is surely an expression of modesty on his part—that social capital is not a panacea but a complementary remedy, to the effect of diverting our attention away from institutional and structural defects to the behavior of citizens.

In this respect, it is revealing to examine how social capital theory reverses Tocqueville’s account of civil society even as it invokes him as an intellectual inspiration. To be sure, Tocqueville greatly emphasized the significance of “civil associations” and went so far as to state that they “pave the way for political associations.”<sup>16</sup> But even a quick glance reveals that, for Tocqueville, political

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<sup>14</sup> Putnam is aware of the possibility that certain types of social capital could undermine, rather than facilitate, democracy. “Social capital ... can be directed toward malevolent, antisocial purposes, just like any other form of capital.” He even distinguishes “bridging (or inclusive)” and “bonding (or exclusive)” forms of social capital to register this point. But despite its significance, Putnam states, this distinction cannot be incorporated into this theory because there is no data. “I have found no reliable, comprehensive, nationwide measures of social capital that neatly distinguish “bridgingness” and “bondingness.” In our empirical account of recent social trends in this book, therefore, this distinction will be less prominent than I would prefer.” *Ibid.*, 22-24.

<sup>15</sup> Jean L. Cohen, “American Civil Rights Talk,” in *Civil Society, Democracy, and Civic Renewal*, ed. Robert K. Fullinwider (Lanham, MD: Lowman & Littlefield, 1999), 65.

<sup>16</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Gerald E. Bevan, intro. and notes Isaac Kramnick (New York: Penguin, 2003), vol. II, pt. 2, ch. 7. All the citations in this paragraph are from here.

associations are what engender and cultivate civil associations, not the other way around as social capital theory posits. In a typical passage, he writes: “[P]olitics promotes the love of and practice of association at a general level; it introduces the desire to unite and teaches the skill to do so to a crowd of men who would always have lived in isolation.” In contrast to social capital theory, Tocqueville’s real concern is to defend the vibrant existence of *political* associations. This, however, is a challenging task, because “[p]resent governments ... entertain a sort of instinctive abhorrence toward [political associations] and combat them whenever they meet,” as they view those associations as creating forces that would challenge their authority. On the other hand, Tocqueville suggestively observes, governments “feel a natural goodwill” toward the flourishing of civil associations as a means to naturally suppress political associations. The rulers “have quickly discovered that these [civil associations], far from directing citizens’ minds toward public affairs, do in fact turn attention from them and, by increasingly occupying citizens in enterprises which cannot be accomplished without a time of public tranquility, they divert them from revolutions.” But this depoliticization of associational life would ultimately be detrimental to the entire society, because without politics civil associations “will always be small in number, feebly conceived, incompetently run, and will never engage in plans on a vast scale or will fail in attempting to execute them.” “Thus,” Tocqueville memorably concludes, “it is by enjoying a dangerous [political] freedom that Americans learn the skill of reducing the risks of [individual] freedom.”

The recent image makeover of the World Bank and the IMF raises concerns about the politically diverting effect of social capital theory. Facing mounting criticisms over the consequences of neoliberalism they had been relentlessly prescribing for developing countries, both institutions began to retreat from its rigid neoliberal position and adopt a more nuanced approach to development. And at the

center of this shift is the discourse of “civil society” and, especially, social capital. But the World Bank takes the concept of social capital exactly as Putnam recommends, namely, as a complement to neoliberal economic policies while evading a more fundamental reconsideration of neoliberalism itself. As a group of scholars have noted, surveying the debate over the adoption of social capital theory at the World Bank, the “thrust of much discussion” was centered on how to “create efficient and equitable exchange and service provisions” by increasing social capital. “In such uses of the concept [social capital] we do not see the idea that markets will inherently lead to unequal accumulation, that social inequality means that market models will aggravate poverty, or that the state has any role to play in leveling wealth through asset redistribution.”<sup>17</sup> Instead of reflecting on the possibility that the imposition of neoliberal policies instrumentalizes democracy by severely constricting the domain of democratic contestation and undermining people’s democratic capabilities and dispositions, the World Bank appropriates social capital theory as a justification for expanding its control into the fabric of social relations and making those relations more amenable to the efficient operation of the market. The underlying assumption here is that the failure of the market stems from the immaturity of indigenous people rather than from institutional or structural flaws—the assumption inherited from the modernization project we examined in Chapter 4.

If social capital theory effectively works to align social relations with the function of the capitalist market rather than genuinely bolstering democracy, another theory of democracy in vogue today anticipates and celebrates the coming of democratic movements. Over the past ten years or so, Michael Hardt and Antonio

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<sup>17</sup> Anthony Bebbington, Scott Guggenheim, Elizabeth Olson, and Michael Woolcock, “Exploring Social Capital Debates at the World Bank,” *Journal of Development Studies* 40(5) (2004): 33-64, 40. See also Ben Fine, “The Developmental State is Dead—Long Live Social Capital?” *Development and Change* 30(1) (1999): 1-19.

Negri have been producing probably the most influential account of what might be termed the “politics of immanence.” According to Hardt and Negri, the current world order is shaped by a new form of capitalism: a capitalism that is truly global and characterized, in its mode of production, no longer by the homogeneous mass production of standardized commodities (often called Taylorism or Fordism) but by the qualitatively diverse, increasingly immaterial production of knowledge, information, communication, and affect. While this evolution of capitalism undermines the sovereignty of nation-states, they claim, sovereignty as such is far from declining. Rather, what is in formation is a new “global form of sovereignty” which Hardt and Negri call “Empire.”<sup>18</sup> Upon their portrayal, Empire defies traditional boundaries in three distinctive realms. First, in the spatial realm, Empire is not tied to a specific region but “rules over the entire “civilized” world.” “In Empire ... all places have been subsumed in a general “non-place” [defined only by monetary value].”<sup>19</sup> Second, in the temporal realm, Empire “presents its rule not as a transitory moment in the movement of history, but as a regime with no temporal boundaries and in this sense outside history or at the end of history.”<sup>20</sup> Third, in the realm of rule, Empire does not simply manage a territory or a population but extends its rule “down to the depths of the social world,” producing social life itself (or, in their terms, engaging in the “biopolitical production”).<sup>21</sup>

Overwhelming as it seems, Empire as a dominant form of sovereignty does not entirely devour politics. On the contrary, new possibilities of politics are immanent to Empire (hence the politics of immanence). Hardt and Negri believe the evolution of capitalism giving rise to Empire also creates a resistant subjectivity called the

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<sup>18</sup> Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), xii.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, xiv, 353.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, xiv-xv.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, xv, 22-41.

“multitude.” Like Empire, the multitude is an all-embracing concept that knows no boundary; it encompasses “all those who work under the rule of capital and thus potentially as the class of those who refute the rule of capital.”<sup>22</sup> Hardt and Negri predict the capitalist production increasingly organized around knowledge, communication, and affect would help overcome internal divisions within labor—which is posited to be the major, though not exclusive, constituent of the multitude—and consolidate it as a powerful force that can challenge Empire. As they put it, somewhat cryptically, “Producing communication, affective relationships, and knowledges, in contrast to cars and typewriters, can directly expand the realm of what we share in common. ... [T]he many singular instances of labor processes, productive conditions, local situations, and lived experiences coexist with a “becoming common,” at a different level of abstraction, of the forms of labor and the general relations of production and exchange ... This becoming common, which tends to reduce the qualitative divisions within labor, is the biopolitical condition of the multitude.”<sup>23</sup> Further, Hardt and Negri argue that the multitude includes not simply the working class but also the poor and the unemployed, because the “flexibility of the labor market” creates a “large gray area in which all workers hover precariously between employment and unemployment.”<sup>24</sup> They assert the multitude provides raw materials, as it were, for building an “absolute democracy” as “the rule of everyone by everyone, a democracy without qualifications, without ifs or buts.”<sup>25</sup>

While grounded in strong democratic commitment, Hardt’s and Negri’s sweeping theory of Empire and the multitude is deeply troubling. The problem is not just that their analysis is based on loose arguments and sparse evidence, though their

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<sup>22</sup> Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin, 2004), 106.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 237.



theory does leave us with puzzles. They claim, for example, that although the present mode of capitalism is more decentralized and creates qualitatively diverse groups of workers, it also produces conditions—increased global communication for one—that enhance the solidarity of labor and all the other marginalized groups. They never explain why expanded communication would work in favor of the solidarity of marginalized people and, even if that is the case, how that solidarity would be strong enough to offset, let alone overcome, structural forces toward segmentation and fragmentation that they so amply highlight. This, then, reveals a more fundamental problem of Hardt’s and Negri’s theory, which is the *frame* of their analysis. They conceptualize the multitude as an *ontological* entity allegedly inherent to fixed historical conditions. Within their framework, both historical conditions and political subjectivities are presumed to be given independent of political practice. Put another way, Hardt and Negri bypass what I identified as one of the most pernicious tendencies of postwar democracy—the dissolution of collective subjectivities—and, as a result, fail to provide insights as to how we can counteract the working of instrumental democracy that suppresses the very formation of political subjectivities from within.<sup>26</sup> In the end, their theory seems to work more as a prophetic gesture that calls the multitude into existence than as an analysis that helps us understand obstacles to, and possibilities for, deepening democracy—which might be what they intend.<sup>27</sup> It is hard to foresee ramifications of prophesy. But in moving the vital question of political subjectivity from the political to the quasi-eschatological realm, Hardt’s and

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<sup>26</sup> To be fair, Hardt and Negri argue that the multitude is the “flesh” and “as yet forms no body,” and that it can be coopted as the “productive organs of the global social body of capital” or “organize themselves autonomously.” They go so far as to suggest “[t]he multitude needs a political project to bring it into existence.” Ibid., 159, 212. Still, their basic claim is that the multitude *already exists* as the effect of the current stage of capitalism, and all it needs is political organization.

<sup>27</sup> Recognizing the difficulty of determining the form of politics centered on the multitude would take, Hardt and Negri invokes Spinoza’s notion of the “prophet” that “produces its own people.” “Today a manifesto, a political discourse, should aspire to fulfill a Spinozist prophetic function, the function of an immanent desire that organizes the multitude.” Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 63-66.

Negri's theory seems to symptomatically announce the triumph of instrumental democracy that has been working to vacate the center of democracy, namely, to foreclose the quest for the demos.

In important ways, the awareness of disaffection with the current form of democracy guides and motivates both social capital theory and the political theory of immanence. However, they fail to recognize the possibility that democratic disaffection might exist as a systemic effect of instrumental democracy, leaving their diagnosis as well as remedies incomplete and, worse, vulnerable to appropriations that reinforce tendencies of instrumental democracy. If, as I have argued throughout my dissertation, instrumental democracy works specifically to displace people's affective orientation toward democratic *politics* into care about private matters, the exclusive focus on the private realm not only misses the core of the problem but, more importantly, effectively conforms to, and likely augments, the working of instrumental democracy. Tocqueville was acutely aware of the danger of decoupling public and private life and prioritizing the latter over the former, but this essential insight is lost to social capital theory. Similarly, the political theory of immanence fails to take into account the nuanced working of instrumental democracy, making its analysis of the political dynamic of global capitalism and its prediction of the rise of democratic subjectivity dubious. Democratic subjectivities are not automatically produced by technological or economic change but formed when people come to view themselves as part of the public or, more precisely, develop affective dispositions to make universal demands as part of the demos. By radically reducing the significance and relevance of the public and the demos, instrumental democracy seriously erodes the context for that formative process. Thus, any attempt to redress structural problems remains unviable unless it goes hand in hand with sustained efforts to restore the notion of the public and bring it back to the center of democratic politics. In this

respect, Arendt's political theory we examined in Chapter 5 provides an important insight, but it is only an invitation for further analysis of our historical conditions and innovative experimentation with alternative ways of undertaking democratic politics.

In a time when people are expressing strong yet elusive democratic aspirations, we urgently need to develop new ways of understanding and practicing democratic politics lest those aspirations degenerate yet again into democratic disaffection. And we can embark on that grave task by dismantling the imaginary hold and the material structure of instrumental democracy. It is long overdue. Instrumental democracy is too obsolete to outlive the Cold War.

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